

THE
ILL EFFECTS
OF A
RASH VOW;
A NOVEL,
In a SERIES of LETTERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL II.

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THE
ILL EFFECTS
OF
A RASH VOW.

MRS. HERBERT,

TO

MISS MONTAGUE.

Brook-Street.

I HOPE Lady Conway continues to approve of her new situation near you; the most prudent scheme she could have adopted in her present state. Lady Almeria is come to town, and seems to think

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B

it

it unnecessary for her to deprive herself of the amusements of London—upon which I took the liberty earnestly to request her Ladyship to conceal her opinion from her friend; she promised me she would: I have likewise seen Mrs. Monson at Mrs. Nugent's:—So, Lady Conway, said she, is sighing in solitude for her dear Charles, who I find is on the point of marriage with Miss Oburn.

I was surprised at her effrontery in speaking to me. Lady Conway, said I, is truly amiable, and unfortunate in the loss of her Lord—but no malignant reports can affect her character.—She sighs, indeed, but it is for the absence of a husband she sincerely loves. Miss Oburn is a charming young Lady I am told, and I hope Mr. Seymour will be happy. You really think then, said she, with great emotion, he is actually going to marry that girl.—What a taste!—Her gold, I suppose, tempts him.

The

The young Lady is a sufficient temptation without the gift of fortune. He will soon grow weary, and repent his choice, said she, reddening with vexation.—Depend upon it, Mrs. Herbert, you will see my words verified.

I hope not, Madam ; they both deserve happiness, and are likely to enjoy it during life.

She turned from me severely mortified, supposing from what I said your cousin was to become the husband of Miss Oburn. I wish he may be so happy—yet it would surprise me to hear he married that Lady, as he seemed indifferent to her charms ; yet men often change their opinions, and certainly he may now approve her.

Mr. Herbert is become fond of cards, finding it amuses melancholy reflections I suppose ; yet he visits Mrs. Delville as

4 ILL EFFECTS OF
usual, which afflicts me : But I will conclude, that I may not dwell on so disagreeable a subject.—Remember me kindly to Louisa and Harriot.

Yours,

L. HERBERT.

FROM THE SAME,

T O

THE SAME.

Brook-Street.

Misfortunes in this wearisome pilgrimage of life frequently succeed each other. — Charlotte's incontinence was a severe calamity to us ; it has brought on another, which, probably, may render the remainder of our days gloomy and unhappy. Mr. Herbert, to chace away the remembrance of his daughter, insensibly became

became fond of gaming, the consequence of which is he has lost ten thousand pounds, and is miserable at the reflection of his folly. I proposed retiring to the Elms, and residing there in future, as the loss of five hundred a year would make it impossible for us to appear in town as usual; but he has positively refused me, and fixed on a plan more saving, alledging for a reason, the affliction he feels at having so greatly diminished my fortune, which reduces my income, in case of his decease before me, to so small a stipend. I tried to convince him, that was so great a misfortune to befall me, as the loss of him, two hundred and fifty pounds a year would be a sufficient and comfortable maintenance in some country retreat.

He wept exceedingly (which almost broke my heart) thanked me for my affection and tenderness, and said, he was sorry to exclude me from my friends even for a time; but he was determined to

make me all the reparation in his power for his cursed folly. He then informed me a friend of his, with his wife, having run through a large fortune, had last year retired on a small pittance they had left to an old chateau, near Cain, in Normandy. He thought it would now be a prudent retreat for us, and he would write to propose residing with them, and dividing the expences of housekeeping.—If Mr. Nesbit approved his offer—we might lay by a thousand pounds a year, which would be a small restitution to me, should he expire before the expiration of the ten years exile, and ease his mind in his dying moments, as he was acting for the best to repair his error.

His kindness overwhelmed me with sorrow, but the idea of leaving all my friends, perhaps for ever, was and is very afflicting. Why will my dear Mr. Herbert be so resolute in embittering his future days?—That he should for my sake
quit

quit England, renders me very wretched. It may not unlikely shorten my existence; he will then be able to return. At the Elms we might live retired and comfortable; but he will not suffer me to speak of it again, and I must submit to his determination. Were it not for religion I should sink under this affliction of parting with my friends and country—for do we not read in Holy Writ, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,” &c. &c. What a consolation is this under the burthen of affliction! — We are to consider him, the Great Disposer of all things, as our parent; receive comfort from that consideration, and indulge the pleasing hope of immortal bliss. To repine at a few days, or years of trouble, is folly—they will soon vanish. Immortal bliss! How joyful the idea! My God, teach me to act according to thy Divine Will during my weary pilgrimage. How trifling, how transient, how insipid and painful is human life! Every hope here ends in disappointment!

We often wish for what (when enjoyed) proves the vanity of human wishes!—We hope on, and continue dissatisfied; nothing but death can emancipate us, and give us true bliss! Let our thoughts be constantly fixed on the Giver of all Good, Sublime, Omnipotent Creator of all Things! Nothing on earth can constitute our felicity! Shorten my days, if it be thy pleasure; nevertheless, thy will be done—thy creature submits, if it is necessary she should suffer a longer probation.

Mr. Nesbit has answered Mr. Herbert's letter, and joyfully accepts, his proposal; therefore, lest I should not live to return to England, my ever dear and amiable friend, favour me with a farewell visit before my departure. — I should be glad to see Louisa likewise, were it not for my wish of concealing from Lady Conway our intended journey, who would undoubtedly, if she knew of it, attend you here; and

and you well know it would be difficult to draw her back to her rural retreat. — The charms of London would be alluring, and Lady Almeria weak enough to encourage her desire of remaining here; but if Louisa can contrive an excuse of business for a few days, it will give me great pleasure to see her.

The preparations we are making for our departure will not afford me time to write more. In hopes of seeing you soon, therefore, I remain

Your much afflicted friend,

L. HERBERT.

Louisa accompanied Selina to town — staid a week, and returned to Lady Conway, who was persuaded business was the cause of her journey.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

LOUISA.

Brook-Street.

THE loss of my dear Mother was the first *deep* affliction I ever felt.— The parting with our dear, unfortunate, and most worthy friend, was almost equal to it. — You can guess what I suffered by the pangs you felt at leaving her, though your friendship and knowledge of her has been of a shorter date than mine; my sorrow consequently must be more acute, for never could one woman regard another more than I ever did, and still do, the amiable Laura.

On the morning of her departure her grief was superior to tears; she poured
trayed

trayed the statue of sorrow. — The carriage was at the door, and every thing ready, when Charles Seymour, finding the door open, hastily rushed into the parlour. Whither are you going, my dear Mr. Herbert? said he, shaking hands with him, while his looks were anguish and horror. A manly tear stole down the cheek of Mr. Herbert, "to do penance for my folly, nay crime, in lavishing away this worthy creature's fortune, and having nothing of my own to leave her," said he.

But where are you going?

To Normandy.

You must not go, indeed, said he, wringing his hand in agony. Retire to "the Elms," something may be done among our friends, a place under government —

B 6

Would

Would not answer my purpose, dear Charles.—I then should not have it in my power to make Mrs. Herbert any restitution in case of my death, and I should be perpetually miserable with the thought of her being left with scarce a maintenance after my decease.—It must be so.—Adieu, my dearest Charles; you are young—take warning by me—avoid gaming, for great as your fortune will be, no riches whatever can be secure with a gamester.

Do not, pray, my beloved Mr. Herbert, said Laura, in a faint voice, accuse yourself.—The intention of amusing your mind was laudable; it was only unfortunate you happened to play so high. She was so extremely agitated she scarce knew what she said. Let us go, added she, the trial will then be over. Give my affectionate compliments to Lord and Lady Seymour (to Charles) and tell them, tho' far distant, I shall always remember their friendship with pleasure.

Will

Will you go, Madam ? said he. Oh ! tell me when we may hope to see you again.

For a moment she was silent through extreme sorrow.—I don't know, Sir, returned she, then embracing me, Selina, dear Selina, we must part. Oh ! may happiness ever attend you here and hereafter. She shed not a tear, and it is impossible to express the poignant anguish visible on her countenance. She trembled, and was cold as death. Mr. Herbert, almost as much affected, took leave of us, and went to see the things were placed right. — Charles was almost distracted. She held out her hand to him, and wished him every happiness.—He seized it, and pressed it to his lips, while his tears fell on it.—May I, said he, offering to salute her, thus bid you adieu.—'This is the most cruel affliction I ever experienced.— Oh ! may Heaven lessen your sorrow, and unexpectedly restore you soon again to your friends.

She

She stood silent and immoveable.—He respectfully saluted her.—She again embraced me. Farewell, said she, Selina, perhaps for ever. — Oh ! I am weak, I have no fortitude in the severe trial of parting with my dear, my best friend. — Adieu, said she, and with difficulty, supported by Charles and me, got into the carriage, attended by Lucy, who will be some comfort to her in her cruel exile.

I returned to the parlour, and wept immoderately.—Charles stood at the window till the carriage was out of sight ; then throwing himself, like a distracted creature, on the couch, cried, I shall see them no more ! I have lost them for ever ; my heart will break !—His own grief was so extreme, that he heeded not mine, till my sobs at length roused him.—My dear cousin, said he, taking my hand, we will weep together.—I love, I mean I esteem them as much as you do.

I know

I know it, said I; every one that is acquainted with my Laura must love her. I have long perceived your regard for her; but if you value your own peace, strive to conquer a passion which is criminal.

He started, as if extremely shocked, that I had discovered his sentiments.—Be not alarmed, Charles, said I, the secret shall rest with me.—I pity you, and have long ago observed your predilection for my Laura, and hoped that time would conquer it; but you are still constant to an unfortunate, amiable woman, who can never be yours.

Hope is the only comfort left me, said he; and since you have discovered the situation of my heart, oh! endeavour not to deprive me of my only support under the present burthen of existence. Tell me not she hates me! with wildness.

Do not distress yourself, Charles, said I, still weeping for the loss of my friend.

She

She has a sincere friendship for you—yet I would have you consider that (situated as she is) it is criminal in you to indulge hope.

Surely I may hope, that if, at some distant period, she is at liberty to listen to my addresses, she will not reject me.

Even that is culpable, Charles.—It is waiting (almost wishing) for her husband's death; and who knows but she may be averse to entering the marriage state a second time.

Do you suppose so? returned he, with quickness:—Then I would not wish to live. — Life without her then would be wretchedness indeed! walking to and fro hastily across the parlour in the greatest agitation.

His agony of mind added to my distress. I attempted not then to torture him farther,

ther, by reasoning against so unhappy a predilection. He threw himself on the couch again, and gave way to feminine weakness, by weeping profusely. I will leave you for half an hour, Charles, said I, to conquer this effusion of sorrow; so saying, I retired to my chamber to indulge grief alone.

The tide of sorrow in an hour began to ebb, and I returned to Charles, who, overcome by fatigue and distress of mind, had fallen asleep. It seems he had heard of Mr. Herbert's misfortune in Ireland, and immediately left that place, and had travelled night and day to get a parting view of our friend. At his bosom hung a locket, which (overpowered by sleep) he had left unconcealed. — I advanced softly to view it; it was elegantly drawn (as I afterwards found by himself) with Laura's hair; in it was the figure of this unfortunate lover kneeling before *hope*; in one hand was an oval with the cypher

L. A.

L. A. in the other a label, which descended to the bottom of the piece ; on it was wrote these words :

*Passion and reason ever are at strife ;
But thy desertion, hope, would terminate my life.*

I perceived the side of it not close, and opening it found a perfect likeness of Laura, which, as I was examining, Charles awoke.

He started up in horror, and, snatching it from me again, concealed it in his bosom.—What have I done ? said he, wildly. Then looking at me—Oh ! Selina, glad am I to find it is only you !—I should have gone distracted had any other discovered my secret. You find how I adore your friend, and be assured nothing can ever extinguish my passion.

I am very sorry to find, indeed, my dear Charles, you indulge it so, returned

L

I. Give me that locket, and endeavour to forget her.

All you can say on that subject is vain, Selina. — Comfort me — pity me, dear cousin, and allay my grief by talking of her ; but, oh ! forget her, I never can or will.

Unhappy young man, his passion is too deeply rooted ever to be erased.—I have laid aside attempting it. — No arguments can avail against so fixed a predilection. Pleased to speak of her, he gave me an account of the progress of his love, which, he informed me, certainly commenced at his first knowledge of her, though so young ; but he was not sensible of its force till our visit to “ the Rock,” where he took an opportunity of entering her chamber in her absence, and taking a lock of her hair which had been cut off that morning, he lamented her unhappy destiny, in being united to a man so unworthy
her

her tenderness, though he now seemed sensible of her worth, and intended to make her all the reparation in his power for the folly he had been guilty of; at the same time deploring the affliction she must endure by so disagreeable an exile from her friends and country.

It is now two days since Laura's departure. — He has been continually with me, and our friend his constant theme. My business is completed, and to-morrow I leave town. Charles is determined to stay here some time. — He is waiting for the duke of —, his relation, who is expected to return to London in a few days. — His intention is to speak to his Grace, and other friends, in favour of Mr. Herbert, flattering himself he shall be able to obtain a place for him. — That he may succeed, you, my dear Louisa, will ardently wish with us. Adieu; I shall soon embrace you.

Yours, affectionately,

S. MONTAGUE.

MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

Chateau de Bois.

AFTER a good passage (which you know my apprehensions at sea always supposes bad) we are arrived safe at the Chateau de Bois, which is close to the wide ocean in front, and sheltered by a gloomy wood behind.--Its situation is formed by nature to nurse grief. Very near the castle, on the side of the wood, is a high rock, which terminates at bottom in the sea.—Over it falls a cascade, whose murmuring sounds, to a mind disposed to melancholy, as mine at present is, invites tears and despondence; but I trust
in

in the Almighty, that he will soon either lessen my sorrow, or terminate my existence in this world. I endeavour to conceal my sensations from Mr. Herbert, who is himself much disposed to be melancholy.—Time will, I hope, restore us to tranquillity, if we remain here. Oh! my dear Selina, I believe parting with those we love, is superior to the pangs we shall suffer in dissolution.—I was much shocked too at Mr. Seymour's sympathy, and sorry he arrived at that dreadful period, for I seemed to be parting with you both for ever. May he be happy with Miss Oburn.—Deeply distressed as I was, I forgot to ask after her.—I suppose they will soon be united.

Mr. and Mrs. Nesbit are to me very disagreeable companions.—His conversation is generally on the pleasures of the turf—a joy he is now cut off from.—Hers a recital of the conquests she made in the beau monde, and the sums of money she
lost

lost at play.—Follies they had both better be silent on. He is gallant and polite—she, though forty, fighting for conquests. Her maid informed Lucy that she, for near ten months, had intrigued with a neighbouring Count, whose affairs are derangé, and sometimes, in Mr. Nesbit's absence, had admitted him to her chamber at night—but that lately he had paid his devoirs to another Lady.—She was jealous, and a coolness succeeded, though he stills visits Mr. Nesbit as a neighbour. From this account of her you may guess she is no favourite of mine, and that it is very unpleasant to be obliged to live on terms of friendship with them.

Mr. Herbert was so kind and obliging as to bring over, unknown to me, a small piano-forte, and placed it in my dressing-room with my favourite music books, (which he made Lucy secretly collect) and some new music. This attentive effort to please me, and relieve my depression

sion of spirits, has made a deep impression on my heart. I can never sufficiently thank him for his tenderness, and wish it was in my power to eradicate every symptom of grief. Time alone can render this situation tolerably agreeable.—I strive to amuse myself with books at present in vain ; but I think we should be much more comfortable were we not mortified with the company of Mr. and Mrs. Nesbit. Music sometimes diverts Mr. Herbert, and at periods drives away sorrow from my breast.—A solitary walk too with my Lucy is far preferable to the society of her superiors.—She is rational, and with her I can talk of dear England and my dearer friends. Some of the nobleſſe have viſited us—others are expected—there are ſome I find arrived to dinner ; I muſt dreſs and deſcend.

Among the company was Count de Blize (the late lover of Mrs. Nesbit) and the Lady he is now ſaid to be well with,
Madame

Madame Brunon. The Count is a handsome man, about thirty, seemingly not averſe to gallantry, or inſenſible to the advantage of his perſon. Madame Brunon, happy at his attention, diſplayed a number of airs, and lamented that Mrs. Neſbit was not fond of muſic, and had no inſtrument to play on.—She informed her there was a piano-forte in my dreſſing-room, and complimented me by praifing my performance. Madame Brunon was *dying* to hear me.—She played herſelf too, and begged to be admitted to my dreſſing-room.—Count de Blize and a kind Lady joined in her requeſt.—Mrs. Neſbit giddily jumped up, and ſaid ſhe would lead the way: I was therefore obliged to follow with thoſe I mentioned. French politeneſs made them very warm in their commendations, eſpecially the Count. — “ Never had his ears been bleſt with ſounds ſo divinely harmonious.”

Madame Brunon, diſpleaſed at his flattering compliments to me, ſat down to

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play

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Madame Brunon, diſpleaſed at his flattering compliments to me, ſat down to

play and sing. — Discord, said he, to Mrs. Nesbit, loud enough for Madame B—— to hear. — She started up, indeed, Madame Herbert, said she, I will never attempt to play again, except you will honour me with a few lessons. — You have put me quite out of humour with my own performance, and de Blize will never patiently listen to me again.

What a misfortune (laughing) Mrs. Nesbit hurried us back to the drawing-room, and seated us at card-tables. Mr. Herbert looked on, having made a resolution never to play again. At cards, as usual, I was absent, thinking of you, Louisa and Lady Seymour, and the happy hours I had passed in your dear society. Madame Brunon rallied me, and asked who I had left behind me in England, to cause such musing.

Several dear and respectable friends, I answered, whose loss I could not at present help

help regretting. — Mr. Herbert was not within hearing, or I should have been silent on the point, and not have disturbed his feelings by such an answer to her impertinent question.

Not *one* favoured one, said she, with meaning?

A Lady I have known from my childhood is that *one* friend I so sincerely regret.—An old friend is not easily replaced.

She is happy, indeed, Madam, in your good opinion, said the Count, and I should think myself happy to be her substitute.—Friendship is the greatest cordial under Heaven; I mean between persons of congenial minds and different sexes, with virtue for its basis.

Oh, mon Dieu! de Blize, said Madame, Brunon — are you dreaming? I never heard you talk sentiment before!

The game luckily ended, for I was heartily weary of them, and their carriages were ordered as it was late. Happy was I to retire to my chamber, and indulge myself with liberty of thinking—for the society I have hitherto met with are too flippant for my taste; but to-day I expect some pleasure in being introduced to an English Lady and her daughter, who reside four leagues off; they are to come early on that account. Mrs. Nesbit says they are Combra Britons, who retired to this country on account of their fortune being small, that I shall be quite ennui in their company, for their words freeze as they utter them. As Mrs. Nesbit's opinion and mine vary in most things, I flatter myself they will prove more agreeable than any Ladies I have yet seen.

Mrs. and Miss Wyndham are perfectly amiable and accomplished.—We were reciprocally pleased with each other, and regretted being so distantly situated, as
to

to prevent our meeting as often as we wished. They do not converse with the volubility of French women, but their conversation is sensible and engaging.

We pass our time, said the old Lady, very agreeably, reading (which we are fond of) work, and promenades, fill every vacant hour, and a rational mind may be happy in any place — though certainly, had fortune given us the choice, in England would have been our place of residence.

O, I detest reading and work, said Mrs. Nesbit, and find time very heavy on my hands. — Promenades with an agreeable companion is well enough; but in dear London every hour is delightfully employed in various amusements.

Not so rationally, I think, Madam, said Miss Wyndham, as here, if it is spent in dissipation.

C 2

Fie,

Fie, Miss Wyndham, don't be a philosopher at eight and twenty ; 'tis too young. What can be more rational than to spend our time amongst people of the *ton*.

We seldom can derive instruction from such society, returned that Lady, gravely, and the company of a few valuable friends, whose conversation I can glean some instruction and improvement from, is to me far preferable.

Oh! said she, you are incorrigible: I must resign you to your gloomy ideas of pleasure; so saying, she started up, and, running to the window, hummed a French air.

Our conversation then fell on books. The Ladies promised to send me all the new publications they received, and I was to oblige them in return with those they had not read. The hours glided away imperceptibly, and we parted, promising

missing to see each other often as possible before winter:

Thus began an acquaintance, my dear Selina, which will be some consolation to me while absent from *you*; for Mrs. Nesbit is so very disagreeable to me, when we have no company, I pass most of my time in my chamber, or walking, while she amuses herself with a noisy, tiresome parrot, who *was* always repeating what he had heard her say while sauntering about the parlour and hall.

“What o’clock is it?—Heigh ho!” and then sighed and yawned, till it quite wearied Mr. Herbert and myself. Was it as rational as that the learned Locke speaks of, which was brought to Prince Maurice, it would entertain us;—instead of which, its dismal sighs and yawns added to our depression of spirits. I am now endeavouring to teach it less melancholy utterance, and frequently take it

to my dressing-room, where I have played and sung a sprightly French air so often, that he can sing half a verse, which is certainly less tiresome than his late chattering moans. — Mrs. Nesbit is likewise delighted at the change, and I shall continue to amuse myself with my pupil for my own sake.

I am now going to write to dear Lady Seymour. Adieu. Be assured, time or distance cannot diminish my affection for you. Lady Conway, I hope, is still satisfied with her retreat. — Remember me kindly to her and dear Louisa, and fail not to write soon to

Your affectionate,

L. HERBERT.

FROM

FROM THE SAME,

T O

THE SAME.

Chateau de Bois.

STERN winter is set in, my Selina.—
Our agreeable rambles are at an end,
and we are confined to this melancholy
mansion.

*Hushed is the linnet and the thrush,
All nature wears a dreary gloom;
Disrobed is every tree and bush,
According to their annual doom.
Oh! quick return, sweet smiling spring,
Renovate verdure—pleasure bring.*

*Now sad reverse on ev'ry tree,
Hang icicles to chill our sight;
Deep snow on hills and vales we see,
Which do our wand'ring wishes blight.*

*Ob! quick return, sweet smiling spring,
Renovate verdure—pleasure bring.*

*The howling winds with furious force,
Shakes this old castle to its base;
And sometimes in its blust'rous course
Does trees and cottages displace.
Ob! then return, sweet smiling spring,
Return, and gentle breezes bring.*

*But see the ocean mountains high
Roaring, ungovernable reign,
Tossing its proud waves to the sky,
While mariners strive land to gain.
On them the billows seem to close,
Consigning them to deep repose.*

*The awful sight we trembling view,
And fancy dying groans to hear;
Drop tears of pity for the crew,
When, lo! the vessel deth appear.
On angry waves it rises high,
Unwillingly to hail the sky.*

Quick

*Quick night descends on Ebon throne,
 With horror deep, and shades the scene ;
 Their doubtful fate remains unknown,
 We shiver with the cold blasts keen.
 The screaming owls mourn in the tower,
 Such, O dread winter, is thy power !*

*In broken rest we pass the night,
 Harrassed by visions full of dread ;
 Oft wake in deep and sad affright,
 And, unrefresh'd, rise from our bed ;
 Wishing for the return of spring,
 To rest, and peace, and pleasure bring.*

*Oh ! quick return, then smiling spring,
 Let owls be silent, warblers sing ;
 While sheets of snow melt quite away,
 And foliage green again display
 Return sweet, smiling, blooming spring,
 Renovate verdure—pleasure bring.*

You will find by this address to the most pleasing season of the year, that I am a bad poetress.—It, however, amused me in the writing, though it may not you

in reading, and your good-nature will excuse my troubling you with it. Never, indeed, before did I so ardently wish for the return of spring, or pass this season of the year in so melancholy and disagreeable a manner:

The bleak situation of this chateau in front, which lies open to the sea, makes us more severely feel the horrors of winter.—Horrors indeed! the view of ships in distress—the dashing of waves against the rocks—the dreadful roaring of the wind, and the not unfrequent vibrations of this castle, renders my heart in continual agitation and terror; and when I see ships in distress, I say with Mariners in the tempest, “Oh! I suffered with those I saw suffer.”

I pass as much of my time as civility will allow of in my chamber, which overlooks the garden and wood, though a gloomy, it is a less tremendous scene than
the

the ocean. There I read, work, and play on the piano-forte, which amusements I am often scared from by hurricanes, which threaten the demolition of the castle. Mrs. Nesbit murmurs at my absence, as she finds no amusement but at cards; every evening I oblige her and Mr. Nesbit, with whom I play at ombre, or piquet.—Mr. Herbert reads or looks on. The parrot sings his songs, in the midst of which he often stops and mimics Mrs. Nesbit, saying, “Mon Dieu! how cold it is! Poor Poll is very cold—stir the fire,” &c. &c.

Count de Blize has ventured once to see us.—He is very civil and warm in his professions of friendship. — Mrs. Nesbit invited him to stay a few days; but as Mr. Nesbit did not second the invitation, and Mr. Herbert looked much out of humour, he refused it.

I sometimes hear from the Wyndhams. They obligingly lament my situation, their

own being a more sheltered one. Mr. Herbert is determined, if we live till next winter, to pass the severe months at Caen. We may live retired there, and not in such continual dread.

I was agreeably interrupted by a letter from Lady Seymour, who bids me not be surprised if Mr. Seymour should visit us next summer, as he talks of an excursion to France. To see an old friend in this country will be a great pleasure to me. — If her Ladyship accompanied him it would be much greater. She says nothing of Miss Oburn. Write to me soon, as letters from my friends is consolation to me. — Adieu, dear Selina.

Yours, most affectionately,

L. HERBERT.

MISS

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

LUCY, MRS. HERBERT'S MAID.

I HAVE just heard from a Lady, who has a correspondence in Normandy, that the Chateau de Bois has been levelled to the ground by a violent storm.—The intelligence has shocked me beyond expression, and I am under dreadful apprehensions concerning my friend, though the Lady mentioned not that any of the family it contained were hurt.

I conjure you, my good Lucy, to write immediately upon the receipt of this to allay my fears, as I know the fright must have affected my Laura's health, and would not at present have her fatigue herself

herself with a recital of the dreadful scene. Lady Conway and Louisa sympathise with me on our friend's account.—Present my condolence and affectionate love, and believe me, dear Lucy,

Your sincere well-wisher,

S. MONTAGUE.

Enclosed was a paper, on which was
wrote,

For LUCY's private perusal.

I am extremely unhappy concerning Laura—yet the knowledge of your faithful care and tenderness is some consolation to me, my good Lucy. Do, my worthy girl, oblige me immediately with a letter, informing me of every particular concerning her health, &c. and whether Mr. Herbert treats her with the tenderness she so truly deserves. My friend's account of Mrs. Nesbit give me some apprehensions,
lest

left she should allure Mr. Herbert, as she is of so gay a turn, and render my Laura additional affliction. Satisfy me in that particular, and conceal my request from your Lady.—My reason for this enquiry proceeds from an intention of serving her, not idle curiosity. If my surmises prove true, Mr. Seymour, in his visit may endeavour to prevail on Mr. Herbert to separate the families, and convince him of Mrs. Nesbit's gallantry with others, which I dare say, with Count de Blize's aid, will be an easy task.

Adieu,

S. MONTAGUE.

LUCY,

LUCY,

TO

MISS MONTAGUE.

Ombre Rosignol.

Madam,

I Received the honour of your letter this morning, and sit down to obey your request of writing an account of my Lady since her departure from England. In our passage she was as usual at sea very ill, and arrived at the Chateau de Bois much indisposed. In a few days she recovered from her fatigue, but her spirits continued depressed, and Mrs. Nesbit was not a companion calculated to lessen her grief for the loss of those amiable friends she had left behind. Mr. Herbert was very kind and attentive to her, and his

his having procured her some amusement from her piano-forte, together with his affectionate behaviour, made her use her utmost efforts to eradicate an unavailing grief. The company she saw was a restraint to her, and the only satisfaction she enjoyed was in rambles with Mr. Herbert or me.—With me she felt more at ease, as she could lessen her sorrow by imparting her grief, and mourning her unhappy situation and absence from you and other friends she esteemed.

Mr. Herbert was totally unacquainted with Mrs. Nesbit's character before he came here.—It seems she had been Mr. Nesbit's *mistress*.—He was loth to oblige Mrs. Herbert, and offend his friend Mr. Nesbit (there you will allow with me, Madam, he was blameable) by a sudden removal; therefore, as he now says, determined to remain one twelvemonth with them—especially as he knew not how to fix himself more eligibly. The acquisition

tion of Mrs. and Miss Wyndham, as friends, was a great comfort to her; and during fine weather they visited each other often, that is, about once a fortnight. As Mrs. Nesbit did not like those Ladies, I frequently attended my mistress to visit them, which periods afforded her the greatest pleasure she received in this country. She did me the honour to introduce to the Ladies as a faithful servant, or rather friend, who lessened her sorrow, consequently I was treated by them with a kindness bordering on friendship, and they made me happy by commendations of a conduct I must have been unfeeling indeed not to have pursued, and to have used my utmost endeavours to lessen Mrs. Herbert's afflictions.

Count de Blize came often to de Bois, and was warm in his professions of friendship—but as the Count's character was that of a man of gallantry. She avoided him, and has informed you, Madam, I find, of
his

his intrigues with Mrs. Nesbit and Madame Brunon. She was very uneasy at being obliged to reside with a Lady of so light a character, and more unhappy concerning it, when winter set in, as she was confined to the house, and found her so frivolous and disagreeable a companion.

The tempestuous weather and hurricanes of wind were past description terrible!—We were in continual dread. — Mrs. Herbert frequently entreated Mr. Herbert to leave the place, and encounter the danger of the roads, which was almost impassable, to fix at Caen during the remainder of winter. He did not chuse to alter his plan.—The storms had no effect on him, and, to confess the truth, I found he was engaged in a criminal amour with Mrs. Nesbit, who, confined from other gallants, accepted him—but she was too ignorant and contemptible to engage his attention long. — Possession brought on disgust.—While he was attracted by her, he seemed jealous of Count de

de Blize's visit, and prevented his staying at the castle at that period; for the Count ventured, during the intense weather, to visit there. The country people say, so severe a season has not been known for years.

One day that Count de Blize came, he found Mrs. Nesbit alone. — I was in an adjoining chamber, and overheard their conversation, which was as follows :

Count.—Alone Mrs. Nesbit! Where is the amiable Mrs. Herbert? Mrs. N—, “amiable Mrs. Herbert;” so you have forsook the lively Brunon in turn, for the languishing Mrs. Herbert! — I am pleased at your penchant, because it will revenge my cause, for Mrs. Herbert is the most prudish of all prudes, therefore you will never gain possession, and had better been content with the more willing charms of Madame Brunon and me. — You are a sad fellow. — Take my word
for

for it, your attempt on Herbert will be vain.

Count—I intend no assault, Madam. — Mrs. Herbert is an accomplished woman, whose character I respect and revere. — Perhaps I may have been called a libertine, because I embrace the willing fair; but, believe me, I would rather die than insult a woman of real virtue with the avowal of a criminal passion. I truly esteem Mrs. Herbert, and could I meet with a Lady of similar principles, and a person so engaging, I would marry to-morrow, and bid adieu to the rest of your sex.

O I can recommend you her counterpart, Miss Wyndham, whom it has been your ill-fortune never yet to see, as she came here very seldom, indeed, before Mrs. Herbert's arrival—but then her fortune is small.—That's a trifling objection, however (laughing) as love will compensate for fortune.

Count.

Count.—I should be very happy to see Mrs. Herbert's counterpart, if she really is so.

Mrs. N—. And here is poor me, who you *once* adored, quite neglected—faithless man —.

Mr. Herbert entered, and put an end to reproaches she seemed going to make.

Soon after this conversation, which I have some reason to think Mr. Herbert overheard, a coolness succeeded between that Lady and my master, and he became again affectionate to Mrs. Herbert. A few weeks passed, when one day, about twelve at noon, a violent storm commenced. — Dinner was set on table, but their terrors were so great, it was taken away untouched. — Night approached ; ah ! Madam, never may you experience the horrors we felt.—The castle shook so, we began to fear its down-fall.—My Lady, terrified,

terrified, threw herself on the bed.—I sat trembling by her, and Mr. Herbert endeavoured to calm her fears, though he was himself apprehensive of the worst, when a loud crack at the other end of the castle, and fall of one of the towers, made Mrs. Herbert start off the bed.—Mr. Nesbit run in with terror in his countenance. Follow me instantly, my friends, said he, we must encounter the rage of the storm abroad, and fly to Joseph's cottage (the gardener's, a quarter of a mile distant) for I am certain the castle will be down in a few minutes : I felt the parlour giving way. We instantly followed him, and, with Mrs. Nesbit and the servants, ran out of the castle. The wind was so high, it was with difficulty we kept our feet ; but as our way lay through a part of the thick wood, it broke its violent effect a little.—The depth of snow made it difficult for us to pass through it, and as we made our escape we heard the castle fall with such a violent crush, that

almost bereaved us of our senses with horror. What a providential escape! Thank God, we arrived safe at Joseph's unhurt, who, with his wife, was crossing themselves, and praying to all the saints in the calendar.

My Lady, quite overpowered with fatigue, terror, and want of sustenance, soon after our arrival, fell into strong hysterical fits, and engaged all our attention. In about an hour the storm abated, and it soon subsided to a calm night, the moon appearing with beautiful pale lustre. Mrs. Herbert's fits continued: I luckily recollected at last that I had a bottle of hartshorn in my pocket, and gave her some in water.—Thus employed, we were surprised by the arrival of Count de Blize, who resided about a league distant from the castle.—The storm had made him apprehensive for its fate.—He had sent a servant to advise us to quit the castle during the storm, and take shelter at Joseph's

in the wood.—The servant was on the road, and heard the castle fall, which intelligence he communicated to his master, who, in horror at the dreadful news, immediately set off with him to seek us, and if we had escaped to offer an asylum at his house, ordering the servants to bring his carriage, if possible, to take the Ladies, and, however difficult, force its way to Joseph's house, where he hoped to find our family.

When the Count entered, Mrs. Herbert was insensible, and my master actually weeping over her, saying, I have killed her by bringing her to this country : — What a vile wretch I am !—Never shall I know peace again !

My dear friend, said the Count, looking on the dreadful scene with horror, compose yourself.—She will soon recover.—Amiable, best of women, her nerves were too delicate to sustain such a shock.—

Good Joseph, instantly give me some vinegar.—Joseph was so terrified, he scarce knew where to look for it.—The Count himself hastily searched every corner, and finding some, heated it, and, putting it on a white handkerchief, applied it to her nose, and bathed her temples with it.—It soon had the desired effect.—She opened her eyes — stared wildly around — then burst into tears, saying, Are you sure, dear Mr. Herbert is safe? (he was standing behind her.) I am, my love, said he, kissing her hand—but to see you thus, rends my heart. She smiled through her tears. — Ah! said she, faintly, how happy am I! The effort of speaking overcame her, and she again fainted. I informed the Count she had taken no sustenance that day, and probably that might retain her in that weak state. The Count's servant had brought some rich wine and biscuits.—He then desired me to mull some immediately for her, which I did, and gave her; it warmed her stomach by degrees

and invigorated her a little.—I then mulled some for Mrs. Nesbit and the gentlemen—took some myself, and distributed more among the servants.—We found it very comfortable after our fatigue and terror.

Mrs. Herbert continued very weak and faint—but her faintings grew less frequent, and when the carriage arrived the gentlemen assisted her into it with Mrs. Nesbit. I attended her in the carriage, to support her on the seat during the short journey. The road was extremely rough and broken, so we were obliged frequently to stop, as she could not bear the jolting of the chaise. The gentlemen attended on horseback.—At length we arrived at the Count's chateau, and Mrs. Herbert was instantly put to bed.

In our fright we had totally forgot a poor old woman, who was kept on charity at the chateau de Bois, and was con-

fined to her bed at the fatal period we quitted it. We were all shocked at the recollection of her—but had some hopes, as she lay in a small wing of the castle she might have saved herself.—Peasants were sent immediately to endeavour to find her.—They soon dug out the unfortunate woman from the rubbish.—Life was not quite extinguished ; she languished that day and expired. The unhappy creature could not have lived many days, had the dreadful event not happened — but our neglect of her was a grief to us ; yet such was our terror at the time, we cannot, I hope, be condemned, or deemed culpable for our want of thought. — She is released from her affliction in this world of sorrow, and we have persuaded my Lady she escaped in time, and died of illness.

The parrot was found'chattering on the ruins.—His cage had been left open, and we suppose he followed us out. " Poll

very

very cold," said he to the peasants.—They cherished, and brought him to his mistress.

Mrs. Nesbit bore the storm with fortitude.—She was terrified just before we quitted the house—but at Joseph's cot was perfectly recovered, and got in high spirits:—Indeed, I believe she had taken something to raise her spirits before she left de Bois. Mrs. Herbert continued for a fortnight extremely ill, and had frequent faintings.—She is now much better, but has violent nervous head-achs, which has prevented her writing to you, as any attention brings them on, and she hoped the intelligence of our removal would not have reached your ears.

The Count has behaved with the utmost respect and attention, and Mr. Herbert has conceived the sincerest friendship for him.—My Lady likewise frequently thanks him for his humane reception of a family in distress. Mrs. and Miss

D 4

Wyndham

Wyndham have frequently sent enquiries after Mrs. Herbert, and lamented that their cottage was too small to receive her and Mr. Herbert.

Yesterday Baron d'Aumont came to visit the Count, in his way to Caen, where he is going on business.—He was much surprised to find Mr. and Mrs. Herbert here, whom he and his Lady had known at Paris, and much esteemed. — Upon hearing of their misfortune, he politely offered them a house, called Petit d'Aumont, about a league and half from hence. His parents had resided at it for many years, he said; it was a strong building, in good repair, and furnished; but that, as he always resided at Paris, or its environs, it had been empty five years, his Father dying then. He should take it as a particular favour, he added, if they would honour him so far as to reside in it.—Mr. Herbert answered, if he would permit him to rent it, he would
with

with pleasure accept the offer.—This the Baron refused — pleaded friendship, and the service it would be of to the building, if he would occupy it ; that if it remained empty it would be forgot, and fall in time to ruin—with many other arguments which at last gained the victory, and Mr. Herbert consented to dwell in it. The Baron complimented Mr. and Mrs. Nesbit (who were strangers to him) by saying, had there been room for two families he should have been glad to have obliged them. Though his servant told our jaques, his Lord was very glad there was not room for them, he having taken a disgust to Mrs. Nesbit from the character he had heard of her—and knew from her manner she must be a very disagreeable companion to a Lady of Mrs. Herbert's taste and sentiments.

He has given orders for the beds to be aired, and d'Aumont set in order, and we are soon to settle there.—What will make

it more agreeable to Mrs. Herbert is, that it is not much above a league from Mrs. Wyndham's. Mr. and Mrs. Nesbit have still a habitation to seek; they wish for one near us, but fear it will be impossible to find one.

I shewed Mrs. Herbert your letter, but concealed the enclosed.—She ordered me to return her affectionate thanks for your kind enquiry, and inform you she is much better, and will write as soon as she is settled at Petit d'Aumont. I have, now, Madam, fulfilled your request, and hope you will excuse all defects in this epistle.

I am, Madam,

Your most obliged humble servant,

LUCY SMITH.

MRS.

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MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

Petit d'Aumont.

MY nervous complaint has almost left me, and I sit down, my dear Selina, to return you thanks for your kind anxiety concerning me. The Almighty has been peculiarly merciful to us, in permitting us to escape from a *dreadful* death. Horrid, indeed, it must have been to have fell amidst the ruins of the castle! My gratitude for the Supreme Being's watchful care can never, oh! never, be sufficiently testified.

Count de Blize's friendship and kind reception of us will never be obliterated from my memory. I was mistaken in

D 6

his

his character, my Selina, and have the pleasure to inform you he is worthy our esteem. The gallantries of a single man must be overlooked.—He has a worthy heart, tenderness of disposition, and, when settled in the marriage state, will, I think, be every way a moral and respectable man. We have introduced him to our friends, Mrs. and Miss Wyndham. The latter seems to have made a deep impression on his heart, and she seems equally pleased with him, so that I hope time will mature their affection, and render them a happy couple, which will give me great satisfaction. The Count often congratulates me on the agreeable change of my place of residence, and being now near such amiable friends, saying, he often lamented my confined situation during the severe season, as he knew Mrs. Nesbit to be a very disagreeable companion for any Lady of solid and refined sentiments. — Such characters as hers, said he, must disgust (with a blush) and I have often reflected with
surprise

surprise on Nesbit's taste and choice, as sentiment and esteem is necessary to bind love, and to esteem her, I think, is impossible. She is frivolous, vain, and a composition of coquetry and folly.

Ah! my Selina, did women of her disposition know or consider the contempt they excite in the breasts of those they have been most lavish of their favours to, they would be virtuous, I think, for the pleasure of retaining their captives—yet how weak is my argument! — Coquets only would act so; but women of such depraved dispositions as Mrs. Nesbit, find they think, greater pleasure in giving themselves up to their libidinous inclinations.

This house is very commodious, well sheltered, and the gardens and grounds laid out with elegant taste. It is a charming retreat, my Selina, and I flatter myself it will soon reconcile me to this country.

We

We found every thing in perfect order: In the drawing-room is a fine toned harp-fichord, which the Baron obligingly had tuned, and requested me to use as my own. There are two vacant bedchambers for company, with others for servants; and we find the mansion would have been large enough to contain Mr. Nesbit's family: I therefore suppose the Baron had taken a dislike to them, or perhaps Count de Blize hinted to him we should be happier without them. Mrs. Nesbit has been here to visit us, and was much out of humour at finding Petit d'Aumont larger than she expected.—She vented her spleen against the Baron, and murmured at her unsettled situation.

Count de Blize is just come to dinner with us; he informs me Mr. Nesbit has taken a small cottage four leagues distance from his present residence, till he can meet with one nearer us. I am not sorry for their removal. Spring is arrived
with

A R A S H V O W.

with fresh charms; the delightful choiristers warble in the grove, and I have great pleasure in walking to view the lovely scenes around with Miss Wyndham. Bountiful Creator! I adore thee, I thank thee, for so happy a change. — From reflecting on our late misery, I doubly enjoy this beautiful and serene retreat! Adieu, my Selina, adieu.

I remain your most affectionate,

L. HERBERT.

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

T O

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN.

Normandy.

AFTER a ten months constant attendance upon men in office, and continual solicitation in favour of my friend,
Mr.

Mr. — (a most wearisome and disagreeable task) I at length obtained from the Duke of —, my relation, a place of twelve hundred a year for him. Joy took possession of my soul: I had long before determined, if I succeeded, to be the happy messenger myself of the agreeable intelligence, as I vainly hoped it would prove, and immediately, on being successful, set out for this place. They had been long prepared to expect a visit from me, merely as an excursion I intended to take for my amusement.

When I arrived Mr. — was out, and I found Clarinda at a harpsichord in the drawing-room. — On hearing somebody enter (for I would not be announced, as I had before sent a letter to apprise them of my coming, lest my charmer should be too much surprised at my sudden arrival) she turned her head, and on seeing *me* started up, and running towards me, exclaimed, Dear Mr. Seymour, how hap-

py

py am I to see you in this country!—Joy was visible on her countenance.—My sudden entrance put her off her guard, and her arms were actually open to receive me, as she would have done her dear Selina; for I am convinced she suspects not the extent of her regard for me, and places it to simple friendship. Such a reception transported me; I folded her in my arms, and was blest with a chaste salute. How is Lord and Lady Seymour, dear Selina, and all our friends? said she, with earnestness. They are well, my dear Madam, and now flattering themselves with the hope of your speedy return to England.

Ah! my friend, said she, with a sigh, at the same time requesting me to be seated—some years must first elapse; but I am now more agreeably situated than I was, and can support absence with more fortitude. You look thin and pale; I fear you have been ill (with tenderness.)

The

The continual anxiety I had undergone, and misery I had endured, on hearing of her misfortune and illness, with the demolition of the castle she resided in (which I informed you of in my last) perhaps may have made some alteration in my looks—but to find her so friendly, nay tender, was the most sovereign balm I could receive.

I informed her of my success.—She was overjoyed.—Oh! Mr. Seymour, said she, how can we ever repay you for your indefatigable friendship; for sensible I am all your time must have been spent in gaining this favour.

Your friendship, and happy return to your friends and country, will be a sufficient payment, said I, kissing her lovely hand.

I know, said she, to a mind like yours, the reflection of having done a benevolent deed is heart-felt satisfaction.

To

To serve friends I so *dearly* regard, said I, is indeed a pleasure.—I believe my eyes spoke tender things.—She blushed, arose, and ordered me refreshment.

Two hours did I pass alone with her the happiest I ever spent in my life, because I fancied I saw a reciprocal tenderness in her eyes. We talked of our friends in England, and her spirits were elevated with the hopes of returning to them soon; mine with the thoughts of restoring her to Selina, and the idea of seeing her often at London.

Mr. — returned to supper.—He received me with joy and friendship: I congratulated him on the pleasing intelligence I brought, and informed him of my success. It is impossible for you to conceive, my Orlando, the affliction and disappointment I endured at his answer. He expressed, in warm terms, the obligation he was under to me for such an act
of

of friendship; at the same time assured me it gave him pain to mortify me with a refusal of my kind offer. His plan was fixed to remain in France; he said his reason for it was to make Clarinda all the restitution in his power by laying by money every year; that if he accepted the place he could not complete it—as he must in England live as he had been accustomed before—his place would require much attendance, and he was not fit for it, and he must in consequence of it remain longer in town than he used to do, therefore it would be impossible for him to lay by money.

The lovely Clarinda joined me in endeavouring to make him alter his mind. She said it would make her happier to reside in England, and if she should be so unfortunate as to survive him, the remainder of her fortune would be sufficient for her, as, if it was larger, she should, during the remainder of her life, pass her
days

days in the country, consequently a small income would be sufficient. I added, he might at least save five hundred a year.— In vain did we argue; this inflexible man would not be moved by our entreaties, and by his obstinacy my pleasing hopes were blasted. Cruel man! he has rendered me miserable!—Years must they reside here, and, if I exist, continually must I lament the darling of my soul's unhappy fate.

Clarinda shed abundance of tears at his refusal.—Why, my dear Mr. ———, said she, will you mortify yourself and me by a longer residence in this country, when you have it in your power to return to England and be happy.

Attempt not to move me from the settled purpose of my soul, answered he; a return to England would soon terminate my life; continual remorse for the injury I have done your fortune would undermine

mine my health : Here I can content myself with thinking, if I live, it will be in my power to replace the money I have rashly gambled away.—I am doing the duty of an honest man.—Compose yourself, therefore, my love —this situation is agreeable to you, and we may, if you please, live happy.

Finding every argument ineffectual, we gave up all hopes of subduing him, and I was compelled to inform the Duke of ——— that I found my friend in such a bad state of health he could not return to England, and as the place required attendance he must decline accepting it.

Thus is all the care and anxiety I endured in soliciting such a favour repaid with disappointment and mortification. Oh! my Orlando, it is a severe stab to my peace : — To see the amiable Clarinda melancholy and dejected racks my heart. A violent pain in my head incapacitates

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incapacitates me for writing more at present; but I will soon again take pen in hand to inform you of my return to England; adieu,

Yours, &c.

C. SEYMOUR.

CHARLES SEYMOUR,

T O

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN.

Paris.

I Intended to have taken leave of my unfortunate friends a few days after I last wrote; but their earnest intreaties that I would lengthen my visit, and the happiness I enjoyed in my beloved Clarinda's company overpowered my resolution, and I remained with them three months. The mistress of my fondest wishes
soon

soon regained her usual tranquillity of mind. “ It is our duty, my good friend, said she, one day to me, to resign ourselves to the will of Heaven.—This is a fine plentiful country. — The society of such friends as the Wyndhams cheer my heart, and I find I can be happy here ; tell my Selina so when you see her, and if she and Louisa could favour me with their company next summer, I should have nothing to wish for.”

Amiable creature ! how I adore her for her fortitude ! — yet, Orlando, in the height of pleasure I received in her society, my heart felt pangs at the idea she was not mine, and that I must, perhaps, pass years without calling her so according to my wishes.

The two worthy friends which afforded her comfort are an English Lady and her daughter, most amiable and beautiful women ; such a one as, had I not loved Clarinda,

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rinda, would, perhaps, have engaged my heart. — She has disposed of hers to a neighbouring Count, or I should have wished you to see her, knowing she would have suited your taste, and rendered you happy. I hope, however, you will soon meet with a female to make you completely so, for you are formed by disposition for domestic felicity.

Three months soon elapsed in such society, and I was compelled to take my leave. Clarinda seemed sorry at my approaching departure.—I shall never forget your friendship, Sir, said she, and though Mr. — would not accept the honour you offered him, he feels strong gratitude for your intended kindness. Indeed we shall miss your company much in this solitary retreat.

I thanked her for her friendship, and was nearly on the point of declaring my passion; but I restrained myself, and

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spoke

spoke only of friendship. Mr. — pref-
 sed me much to make a longer stay, and
 visit them again next spring; the latter
 invitation I probably may accept.

Count — acquainted me just before
 my departure, that he was informed from
 good authority, that Charlotte Herbert
 and Lord Conway had quarrelled.—She
 was gone off with an Italian Marquis,
 and his Lordship set out for Paris: I
 therefore determined to visit this place
 before my return to England, and endea-
 vour to make him accompany me. I
 am to see him this morning, therefore
 will not conclude my letter before our in-
 terview has passed.

My hopes are crushed in the bud.—
 This infatuated man has taken an Opera
 girl into keeping, and determines to re-
 main in this gay city. I fear he will soon
 lavish away his fortune here, and future
 misery will be his lot. Such creatures as
 her

her he has taken to his bosom, seldom leave their gallants while any thing remains to fleece them of, and are very dexterous at dissipating thousands in a short period. I pity his unfortunate wife; who behaves with great propriety.

She, however, will be sure of a provision, as in his fondness for her before marriage he settled eighteen hundred a year on her for jointure. To-morrow I set off for England, dispirited at my disappointments, and my heart more firmly than ever attached to an amiable object, that, alas! I have very distant hopes of enjoying, if ever it will be my happy lot to call her mine. How predominant, how fascinating is the power of love and sympathy of souls! Neither reason, philosophy, or religion, can subdue my unfortunate, nay criminal, affection!—Attempts are vain. I more fondly adore her than ever.—Life is a burthen, a misery to me: But that I

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may

may not weary you with my complaints,
I will conclude myself

Yours, &c.

C. SEYMOUR.

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN,

T O

C. SEYMOUR, ESQ.

Florence.

A FEW mornings since I was much surprised at the sudden entrance of my friend Count d'Almane, who I little expected to see here. You know he is a man of feeling. — His countenance informed me something had affected him, and, after common compliments, he unfolded the cause of it. I have been witness to a scene, said he, that has wounded
my

my sensibility, though the object that has awakened my compassion has, by her guilt, partly deserved her sufferings. When we see a fellow creature languishing in misery, and oppressed by sickness, nay expiring, overwhelmed with the horrors of conscience, our hearts must be callous indeed, if we do not extend the hand of comfort, and to sooth their anguish, forget they have justly incurred the punishment Heaven inflicts on them.

On my arrival at —'s hotel, being fatigued with my journey, I ordered some refreshment, and enquired of the landlord what company were in the house.—He answered none, and retired. My servant then entered, and informed me (knowing my custom of relieving distressed objects) that, in a wretched apartment adjoining the stables, an English Lady was expiring, who had been mistress to the Marquis Varino—that he had cast her off, and left her in a strange country to perish through

poverty and sickness. Thinking my presence might distress her, I sent La Fleur with a trifling present, and promise of future relief. She requested the favour of a visit from me, that she might personally thank me, and request a farther favour. Willing to alleviate her sufferings, I immediately complied, and found this emaciated and unfortunate woman on a wretched pallet, with a ragged coverlid over her, scarce large enough to hide her expiring frame.

She thanked me for my humanity, on which she wept, and said, alas ! arrived too late to restore her to health and life.—The landlord had behaved to her with extreme cruelty ; and, after having sold all her cloaths and valuable effects, had left her in that apartment to struggle with sickness, and perish through want : But I have deserved all, said she, that I have suffered—may it become atonement for my guilt ; yet, oh ! I meet death with

terror

terror past description.—A vicious inclination induced me to leave my family, and go off with a profligate nobleman from my own country :—To him I was not constant.—We quarrelled, and I lived with the Marquis Varino, who fickle, and fond of variety, left me with twenty pieces only to combat with indigence and sickness; for at the time he left me I lay ill of a fever, occasioned by over-heating myself at a ball. Illness brought on serious reflection.—I wrote to Lord Conway, requesting him to bestow his bounty, that I might recover my health, and endeavour to get into some honest method of livelihood. — My intention was to return to England, and wait on some Lady, for I dared not think of returning to my friends, whom I had injured so much by my vile conduct.

Lord Conway vouchsafed me an answer—but what an answer? How cruel! How inhuman!—He refused his bounty;

he left me to perish in a strange country, reproaching me at the same time for my infidelity to him, and acquainting me that I had been the cause of my Father's ruin; who, to drown remembrance of me, had taken to gaming, and lost all his fortune—concluding with informing me, no one knew where he and his worthy wife were gone. This intelligence was the dart of death; it filled me with remorse and horror.—I had no friend—intirely amongst unfeeling strangers.—My fever returned, and it threw me into a languishing state, which, from agony of mind, and want of proper necessaries, has brought me to the gates of the King of Terrors. I last night (by chance) heard from a servant, who turned into my apartment, that Sir Orlando Selwyn is at Florence.—I am dying, Sir, and before I resign my last breath wish to see him. —Will you honour me so far (knowing your humanity I trespass on your goodness) as to request him to visit me?—I wish to speak with him.

I promised

I promised I would immediately wait on you, and doubt not of your acquiescence to her desire.

By d'Almane's account I guessed it was your friend's daughter, and immediately attended him. What an object! Had the inhuman Conway seen her, surely it must have awakened remorse in his breast. He seduced her from her family and friends, and, cruel man! permitted her to perish, while he is lavishing thousands on an object equally culpable.

She thanked us for the honour we both did her.—Pardon the liberty I have taken, Sir Orlando, said she; you are the friend of Mr. Seymour, and he is the friend of my unhappy Father. — Alas! I have brought misery on that dear parent, the reflection of which rends my heart.— Oh! may repentance expiate all my crimes. In a few hours, Sir, I shall be no more.—What I have to request of you

is, that you will inform Mr. Seymour of my death ; his feeling heart will fix on the most cautious manner of acquainting my dear parent of my repentance and decease (for I suppose *he* knows where his retreat is ;) but let not my dear Father, or the worthy Mrs. Herbert, know of the misery I have endured from sickness and penury.—Never may they be acquainted with my sufferings to wound their tender hearts.

She then uttered several effusions of despair, which I endeavoured to calm by hints from Holy Writ. At length, quite overpowered with fatigue, she fainted ; and as she was too exhausted to be removed, we ordered proper coverings for her bed—sent a proper person to attend her—a physician, and nourishing cordials, &c. but attention, nor comforts, could prolong her life ; she expired last night, imploring blessings on us with her last breath !

Thus

Thus died, in the flower of her age, a young woman, who (had she continued virtuous) might have still lived—been a comfort to her Father, and gaming, perhaps, might not have allured him to so serious a loss. I, however, afforded her a gleam of comfort, by assuring her his affairs were not so bad as Lord Conway represented them, and would, in a few years, be arranged again to his satisfaction. In her confession she owned, that Lady —— had perverted her principles in Yorkshire, though the worthy clergyman and his wife had endeavoured to fix strict principles of virtue and morality in her young mind. In short, said she, my heart was naturally prone to vice, and before I ever saw Lady ——, I had sacrificed all that is valuable in my sex to a young surgeon in the village.—He soon grew weary of me, and our gardener was my next lover, and my constant night companion till I was introduced to her Ladyship. Mr. Murray, Sir Harry Bell, and other gentlemen, then

succeeded him in my favour till I came to London, when Lord Conway addressed me.—He imagined me innocent, thought he had triumphed over my virgin heart, and what followed you are acquainted with already.

This unhappy woman's confession unfolded a mystery to me, and you may perceive, from what I have wrote of the intelligence concerning Mr. H——, which she mentioned, that I am well convinced Clarinda and Mrs. H—— are the same, and that the mistress of your heart, which you visited in Normandy, is actually the late unfortunate girl's Mother-in-law. — The deceased did her strict justice, she allowed her elegant and accomplished, and perfectly amiable. Be not unhappy, my dear Charles, your secret shall remain sacred with me, and you may as usual write to me of her under the name of Clarinda. — I pity your unfortunate predilection, and wish you could conquer it,

as you cannot (for I can suppose it's almost impossible to eradicate so deep-rooted an affection) write to me of her, if it is any alleviation to your sorrow. Count d'Almane's case is similar to yours; he says neither time or absence, or any effort, can chase the unwelcome intruder love from his breast. I wish not to be sensible of this tyrannic passion, since it causes such misery to friends I so much esteem.—It is indeed, as a certain author says, “Putting our peace of mind in the power of another.” Adieu,

Yours, most sincerely,

O. SELWYN.

MRS.

MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

Petit d'Aumont.

COUNT d'Blize united his own tender sensibility and friendship, in complying with Mr. Seymour's request of informing us, in a cautious and feeling manner, of the poor unfortunate Charlotte's death, which has plunged my dear Mr. Herbert into a deep melancholy. It was some consolation, however, amidst our grief, to find she was sensible of her past errors, and that, if the Almighty had prolonged her existence, she intended to return to England, and endeavour to expiate for the past by her future good conduct : It was likewise a comfort to us to find she was not distressed in her finances, and

and the humane Sir Orlando and his friend soothed her pangs in her last moments. May that Great Being, who governs all things, reward them for their kindness to a poor unhappy girl, who, in a strange country, oppressed with sickness, and undoubtedly remorse of conscience, languished out her life without the consolation of a last blessing from her Father! I sincerely lament her fate, and hope she has found absolution from that merciful Deity, who has promised forgiveness to all repentant sinners, and knows the hearts of all his creatures.

The winter has been very mild, and has not deprived us of the company of our amiable friends; but this melancholy intelligence has so much depressed our spirits we cannot at present enjoy their society. I now more than ever regret Mr. Herbert did not accept Mr. Seymour's kind proposal, as in London, in a larger circle, he would not have felt this blow
so

so severely. I have proposed a tour to Rouen, or some where, by way of changing the scene for a short time.—Count de Blize has offered to accompany us, and Mr. Herbert promises to comply with my request in three weeks. We have suffered much affliction, and I hope in future fortune will smile on us : It is, however, our duty, and necessary for our peace of mind, to look on the brightest side of futurity, and hope the best. The deepest despondence cannot make us frail mortals alter the decree of Heaven ; it is therefore the wisest course to resign to its dispensations without murmuring. Ah ! how superior is Christian fortitude to philosophic stoicism ; the latter sinks to a cold, unfeeling apathy—the former brings consolation with a warm, heart-felt satisfaction, and hope of future reward.

On our return from our little tour, Clara Wyndham and the Count are to be united. — May they enjoy the bliss they deserve.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Selina; pray write soon. May your days roll on peaceful and happy, is the sincere wish of

Your affectionate,

L. HERBERT.

The letter of condolence from Miss Montague, and her answer to the last, are omitted, having nothing interesting in them.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MRS. HERBERT.

IT gives me pleasure to find your little tour has had the desired effect, and that Mr. Herbert's grief has subsided to a calmer remembrance of his unfortunate daughter; time only can totally subdue
his

his natural sorrow. Your spirits being now reconciled, I may venture to inform you of an event which I know will be unpleasing to you.

Lady Conway in December last, hearing of her Lord's conduct at Paris, and finding him incorrigible, determined no longer to seclude herself from the world, and resolved to pass the winter in London. As I thought the presence of myself and Louisa might be some restraint to her career of dissipation, disagreeable as it was to us to leave our sweet retreat, I proposed our accompanying her. This offer, I believe, was not altogether agreeable to her Ladyship, but she accepted it with an affected pleasure.—Like a child that has long been deprived of its play-things, she entered with avidity into every scene of dissipation, notwithstanding our remonstrance against it, and became in dress a slave to the vicissitudes of fashion, not considering, when pay-day comes, how
low

low it will reduce her purse, for she dresses in a very expensive stile, and has made herself so conspicuous by her attire, that she now leads the ton, and we have a Conway bonnet and a Conway cap.—This has so much flattered her vanity, that she is more attentive to dress than ever; and as we have no sway over her, we intend to leave town to-morrow, and no longer remain a sacrifice to a woman who regards not the admonitions of sincere friendship. She promises to return to her house near us in May, and has given a vague promise to attend us in June to visit you, which I much doubt her fulfilling; but wish she may, as you, perhaps, may have more influence over her than we have, and hope you can persuade her to remain with you, or near Bath, next winter. This passion for coquetry and folly absorbs all her amiable qualities, when in the vortex of dissipation she slights her *best* friends. What an unhappy propensity!

Is

Is it not astonishing that Lady Conway should again take to her friendship the woman who at Lord Seymour's used her so ill!—but her folly is uniform, and she is quite intimate with Mrs. Monson, who wanted her to engage Charles Seymour in all her parties.—He with prudence declined attending Lady Conway in public, and shunned Mrs. Monson, who, out of revenge, reported he visited her Ladyship in private—which report reaching his ears, to preserve her reputation, he left town. How can Lady Conway be so stupid to her own fame as to countenance such a woman.—Indeed, my Laura, I must boast of my cousin, as few young men of fashion are so considerate, and would sooner assist in depriving a heedless female of her character, than fly to preserve their name from a stain.

Adieu ; the time will soon approach when I shall again be blest in your dear society.

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society. Louisa joins me in every wish for your happiness, and I remain

Your most affectionate,

S. MONTAGUE.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MRS. HERBERT.

Villa-Burton.

LADY Conway, contrary to our expectation, was true to her promise, and arrived here the latter end of last month. She intends setting out with us in a few days for Petit d'Aumont, where she says she will stay till the first week in September, at which time she is under an engagement to meet a party of friends at Paris. Thoughtless woman! to throw herself

herself in the way of her husband, and be a witness to his fondness for an infamous courtesan. A heart so incorrigible as his she cannot hope to regain, and if she has any dormant regard for him, the sight of his Lordship must awaken it, and prove a fresh stab to her peace. It is like voluntarily approaching a serpent to sting her. My hopes of alluring her purpose are now founded on that influence you hold over her, which, I flatter myself, with our united endeavours, will bring her to reason. As her Ladyship is to be of our party, Charles, for obvious reasons, declines attending us, and will not visit you this summer. Adieu, we shall soon meet.

Yours, sincerely,

S. MONTAGUE.

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MISS MONTAGUE,

TO

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

Paris.

L AURA's eloquence was insufficient to bend Lady Conway's settled determination of passing two months in this gay city; when, finding she would not listen to our admonitions, I thought it unnecessary to attend her, as she would undoubtedly pursue her own humour there in spite of my presence. At the period her woman was actually packing up her cloaths for her departure, an express arrived with melancholy tidings. He had sought her Ladyship in England, and followed her to Normandy. Lord Conway was dying with several wounds he received in a duel from a gallant of Madame Valois,

lois, and a friend of his wrote a few lines, by his Lordship's desire, to request her to forgive his past treatment, and personally confirm his pardon, as he could not long exist. This intelligence awakened her tenderness. She was much afflicted, and entreated Louisa and I would attend her to Paris. In her situation it would have been cruel to refuse. We sympathized with her just grief, and set out with her immediately for this place, she having first sent off an express with a letter, assuring him of her forgiveness, adding, she would be with him almost as soon as the messenger. Upon our arrival Monsieur de Pont acquainted us his Lordship expired an hour before; that he had received her letter, which gave him great satisfaction, and he flattered himself he should live to see her; but sudden convulsions seized him, and terminated his life.

His Lordship's sudden exit has extinguished all her gaiety, and she is in a
very

very languishing state from the shock it has occasioned. The body is to be sent to the family vault, and, as soon as her health will permit, she proposes returning with us to England, and pass her year of mourning at the grove. The friends she was to meet here she would not see ; it was Mrs. Monson and a party. I imagine you will now think it too late in the year for an excursion to Petit d'Aumont. — Our friends there are well, and the Count and Countess de Blize, with Mrs. Wyndham, make Laura happy by their friendship. I shall not expect to hear from you till I return to Villa Burton. Louisa joins me in wishes for your felicity. I am, my good cousin,

Your affectionate kinswoman,

S. MONTAGUE.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MRS. HERBERT.

Villa Burton.

WE are, thank God, all safe arrived at this place, my dear Laura; Lady Conway continues in deep affliction at the loss of her Lord. — His unkindness is erased from her memory, and she reflects only with bitter regret on the time she lived happy in his affection. I could not have thought, gay as she was become again, her Ladyship would so sensibly have suffered from his death. — She severely condemns her own conduct before he quitted her, and now imagines, had she acted with more prudence he would not have forsaken her; that she is sensible of her error I am pleased to find,

as I hope it will influence her future conduct; but, alas! the unhappy Lord Conway was, I fear, too great a libertine at heart to have remained constant to any wife, however prudently rigid her conduct; yet it is natural, when death dissolves a union, to forget the past follies of a beloved object, and recollect only the pleasing part of their character. Our efforts to amuse her Ladyship at present are vain. She is almost continually weeping, and will seldom be persuaded to take the benefit of air necessary for her health. As my time is totally engrossed by her, you must excuse this short epistle. I will soon again resume my pen.

Yours, sincerely,

S. MONTAGUE.

F 2

MRS.

MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

Petit d'Aumont.

OUR days glide on in such a serene, uniform tenor, my Selina, that my letters must become insipid to you, having nothing worth notice to communicate. I am happy and content, and should now be perfectly satisfied to end my existence here.—All that is wanting to complete my felicity is your dear society.

From the summer-house, which commands an extensive prospect, where we have often passed happy hours together, I view the immense ocean.—A tempest rages; its waves look dark, and terrify and impress the mind with horror.—A
calm

calm succeeds.—The sun glitters on the bosom of the deep, and cheers the late gloom.—Such is the variable state of human life, which is chequered in turns by storms of misfortune, and returning calms and peace; at least so I have hitherto found it.

Mr. Seymour left us yesterday. He is to meet a friend at Avignon, and proceed with him on a tour through Italy; they think of passing the winter at Rome, and will call of us next summer in their return to England. Mr. Seymour was lamenting that he should not be so fortunate as to see his friend Sir Orlando, who, by a letter he received from him a week since, informed him he was returning to England, and should visit his estate in Somersetshire. Your cousin has wrote to him, and enclosed a line to you by way of introduction, as his seat it seems is not ten miles distant from you. You may be sure he has commended you highly: I

F 3

would

would rally you on the subject, but that I know it is your fixed resolution to remain single.

I am glad to hear Lady Conway has emerged from the deep grief she has so long cherished.—Her year of mourning is almost expired.—I hope in future she will act with prudence.—Present my kind love to her and Louisa.

Yours, affectionately,

L. HERBERT.

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SIR ORLANDO SELWYN,

T O

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

Selwyn-Place.

YOUR letter has introduced me into delightful society. — I am charmed with your cousin and Louisa. — I sincerely esteem, but I adore the all-enchanting Lady Conway. My determination of always repelling the shafts of the little mischievous deity, Cupid, was vain;

*“ For love does human policy despise,
And laughs at all the counsels of the wise.”*

The first sight of Harriot caused new and powerful emotions at my heart, and I find it is in her power to render my future destiny happy or miserable. Her

F 4

mourning

mourning habit, which she is soon to throw aside, and the languor of her countenance from not having intirely subdued her sorrow for a late worthless object to me, gave her additional charms ;—but when her natural vivacity bursts forth, and her eyes shine with chearful brilliancy, I, like Cymon, stand gazing in silent and rapturous astonishment. How could you write to me with cool indifference of one of the most lovely of women ? — How could you once reject her ? But I forget, your heart was enslaved. Such a husband as Lord Conway might occasion her to practise coquetry, in hopes of retaining his heart.—To one sensible of her worth, I make no doubt she would have acted otherwise.—After his desertion, did she not behave with the strictest propriety ? Ah ! Charles, you must not in future speak the least slighting word of her.—I feel I cannot bear it, even from you. As soon as her mourning is expired I intend to make known my passion.—If she
rejects

rejects me I shall be wretched as yourself. I now have a clearer conception of your sufferings, which must be great, the object of your love being in her present situation.

As I wish to give you the state of my heart, in return for your friendly confession and candour to me, I shall enclose this to Count B—— at Turin; and if you have left that place, request him to forward it to you. Write to me soon, and approve my choice; it will find me at Selwyn-Place.

Your sincere and affectionate

O. SELWYN.

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

T O

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN.

Turin.

I AM so well assured of the powerful effects of love on hearts like yours, that I am convinced a predilection once indulged can never be eradicated. You tell me to approve of your passion; I wish I could, Orlando. Harriot is handsome, accomplished, and has several amiable endowments of mind.—All I fear on account of your happiness, is her natural propensity to coquetry and love of dissipation.—If you can, by your wise counsels, conquer those foibles, she will prove an amiable partner for life. I could wish you would not be too sudden in your declaration, but let her pass one winter in town;

town ; you would then be a better judge whether she will prove conducive to your felicity. A woman of a more serious disposition would have better suited yours: However, I suppose my advice will be rejected, for head-strong passion makes us blind to the faults of those we love ;—yet, anxious as I am for your future felicity, I could not avoid offering my real sentiments concerning your choice. I have done what I thought the duty of friendship.—You must pardon me ; henceforward I shall say nothing more of her faults, and leave you to act as you judge best for your own happiness. We are now setting out for Rome, where I hope to receive a letter from you in answer to this, and information concerning your future intention.

I remain, dear Orlando,

Yours, &c.

C. SEYMOUR.

F 6

MISS

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MRS. HERBERT.

Villa-Burton.

IN a former letter I acquainted you we received great pleasure in the society of Charles's friend, Sir Orlando Selwyn. — His worth, in my estimation, is superior to my cousin's, as I have been informed, from intimate friends of both, that the Baronet does not indulge himself in illicit amours, which is a rare example in a young man of rank in this age, who do not regard virtue like heroes in days of chivalry. — Charles, I find by the Lady of this friend to both, is sometimes frail enough to enjoy transient connections with our sex, which, in my opinion, however customary, lessens his other good qualities,

qualities, and renders him unworthy a virtuous woman's love; — but if every virtuous woman was to think so, very few marriages, indeed, would happen.—As a Sir Orlando is a phoenix, an old maid may be allowed to be thus rigid.

Lady Conway has it now in her power to be completely happy. — Sir Orlando has offered her his hand. — She has accepted it, and I hope will forget her follies, and bestow on him the happiness he deserves. They are to be married in a fortnight's time. Charles is much displeased at his friend's choice.—He writes to me it is impossible he should be happy with her. — He is of a tender, domestic disposition, she gay and coquetish;—but I flatter myself her love for him, which is at present unbounded, will make her insensible to any pleasure but that of repaying his tenderness.—His sentiments accord with yours, that I think he will have influence over her conduct. — When you know

know him, I think, from sympathy of sentiment, you will yield him your friendship.

We are all bustle in preparing for this hasty wedding, therefore I must conclude myself,

Yours, affectionately,

S. MONTAGUE.

MRS. HERBERT,

T O

LADY CONWAY.

Petit d'Aumont.

I SIT down, my dear Harriot, to congratulate you on your union with a gentleman, whose amiable character promises you as perfect felicity as can be felt in this life.—May you for series of years enjoy

enjoy that felicity, till you both together, exhausted by age, drop into a happy elysium. With such a companion home will be delightful to you, and *tonish* society become disgusting; for what is the admiration of coxcombs but nonsense, compared to the endearing tenderness and improving conversation of a man of sense and true worth. Forgive this hint from a friend, who fears the liveliness of your disposition betraying you again into dissipation. — Listen not to those women of fashion who would ensnare you. What they call friendship is the allurements of a false friend to draw you from real happiness. Reflect on the past, and you will own dissipation always left a dissatisfaction and vacuum at heart. Present my proper compliments on the occasion to Sir Orlando, whose character I esteem, and believe me your very sincere and affectionate friend,

L. HERBERT.

SIR

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN,

T O

C. SEYMOUR, ESQ.

I AM blest past description. — The lovely Harriot is mine, now divested of every inclination to coquetry. She shewed me a letter from your Clarinda, wrote with the pen and heart of an angel. I am very glad I saw her not before my adorable Harriot, as with such sensibility and elegant person (which every one allow her to have) I should certainly have become your rival, and consequently have been wretched. We intend soon to go to London for the winter. I am sorry you do not come for some months to be witness of my felicity, and sincerely wish you equally happy. Adieu, my dear Charles,

Yours, &c.

O. SELWYN

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SIR ORLANDO SELWYN,

TO

MISS MONTAGUE.

Portman-Square.

WILL you excuse the effusion of a distressed mind, amiable Miss Montague?—My Harriot, swayed by her misnamed friends, Lady Almeria and the unprincipled Mrs. Monson, has entered into the vortex of dissipation. She regards not my tender admonitions, and dresses to allure those coxcombs, who hover about married women to make them contemptible and infamous. My peace is wounded—my heart almost breaking. Thus afflicted, I take the liberty, sensible of your friendship and goodness of disposition, to request, if your health will permit, you will make us a visit, having

114 ILL EFFECTS OF

having hopes your prudent counsel will again restore her to herself and me. If you will honour us with your company, let it not be known to her Ladyship the request came from me. -- Her conduct will soon give you an opportunity of reproofing her. Though I mentioned not the amiable Miss Godfrey, I flatter myself she will accompany you, and that your united endeavours will restore me to happiness. Business in London may be your plea, my worthy friend, and I shall hope soon to hear from Harriot that you intend me a visit.

I remain, with respect and esteem,

Dear Madam,

Your (at present) afflicted friend,

And humble servant,

O. SELWYN.

MISS

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Portman-Square.

MY sudden arrival much surprised Lady Conway ; I alledged business as the cause, and she seemed satisfied it was so. Sir Orlando is grown pale and thin, which gave me much concern to see ; but I noticed it not to her Ladyship, lest it should alter her mode of living, and not afford me an opportunity to expatiate on her conduct. A few days gave me that opportunity. Three nights successively she staid out till four in the morning, while the worthy and much-afflicted Baronet traversed his chamber in agony ; for she would not suffer him to attend her, as she knows he hates late hours.

hours.—To the rest of her follies she has taken a passion for gaming, as it is the reigning fashion, which is more dangerous to her health and honour than her other propensities.

Lady Almeria called yesterday morning, or rather mid-day, and condoled with her on her loss the night before. I asked what that was? — Oh! only five hundred pounds, said her gay Ladyship. Harriot was dispirited, and her looks were haggard and wan from want of natural rest. When alone with her I began with my admonition, and pointed out the danger and ill effects of the dissipated life she led, remarking how vexation, from her conduct, had prejudiced the health of one of the best and tenderest of husbands;—that if she no longer regarded *him*, at least a concern for her own health and fame, ought to sway her to lead a more regular life. I presented her a pocket-glass, and bid her observe how late hours had diminished

minished her beauty, and which in time, if pursued, would totally destroy it. The loss of beauty, I said, *might* lessen Sir Orlando's affection for her, and, what perhaps she valued more, make her lose the admiration of those men she so much wished to retain in her chains. Criminal as such a desire was in her, I bid her consider, that when she had lost her health, and was sinking on a bed of sickness, and approaching dissolution, it would be too late to retrieve the happiness she had thrown away by her own folly; and that then she would not have the comfort of a heart-felt satisfaction resulting from rectitude of conduct.

She started. — "I protest you terrify me.—Lord! I do nothing but what all women of fashion do—one cannot enter society without play, and that causes late hours."

Erroneous examples are not to be followed, my dear Harriot.—Many women
of

of fashion are unfaithful to their husbands bed—and the cause frequently proceeds from gaming.—They first lose large sums to the man who is waiting to seduce them, and then fear making it known to their true friends, sacrifice their honour.—Gay men have always hopes of success with female gamesters.

You are rigid, indeed, said she, almost angry; but do you really think my person altered?

I found the idea of her beauty's diminishing had more effect on her than any other thing I had said.—On that I rested my hopes. I told her I was much surprised with the alteration of her face when I first arrived.—Her eyes were sunk and languid, and, though by the aid of rouge she supplied the loss of natural bloom, it could not conceal the haggardness of her countenance, which she meant to hide; and that, as she had a cough on her, I thought it threatened a consumption.

This

This produced some real terror on her mind.—She surveyed herself in the glass. Good God! said she, do you really think so?

I answered I did.

She wept; you are cruel, but I know you do it out of kindness.—I will go to Selwyn-Place, there I shall recover my health.

If you regard your own welfare, said I, coolly, you will.

Sir Orlando entered.—Her heart was softened.—She took his hand.—My dear Orlando, said she, I wish for country air. Will it be convenient to you to go to Selwyn-Place?

His eyes sparkled with pleasure.—You know, my love, said he, your will is law to me.—I will attend you when you please.

It

It was then agreed we should set out next week.

Lady Almeria called in the evening, and was struck with astonishment at this sudden resolution. — “What leave town before the Ranelagh season is over?”

My health requires it, answered her Ladyship, with a sigh.—I am quite ill; late hours disagree with me.

Lady Almeria seemed displeased, and took a hasty leave.—Lady Conway then retired to write letters.

I was left alone with the worthy Sir Orlando.—He was warm in effusions of gratitude for the happiness I had conferred on him.—Ah! was his Lady but sensible of his value, she would never give him a moment's pain. Had our dear Laura been blest with such a husband, two mortals would have been truly blest! Were
people

people more cautious in entering the marriage state, and first seriously consult each others disposition, and whether their souls sympathised, and their opinions were in unison, there would be more happy couples. Undoubtedly it is decreed otherwise by Heaven; for it is not in this life we are to be truly happy; it is a state of trial, and inconsistent with perfect felicity. Adieu, dear Louisa, we shall soon meet.

Yours, affectionately,

S. MONTAGUE.

MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

Petit d'Aumont.

IT gives me pleasure to find the amiable Sir Orlando's peace of mind is
VOL. II. G restored,

restored, and that Harriot now behaves with propriety; he deserves a happier fate, for his life with her must be chequered. Pleasure is so interwoven in her disposition, that never, my Selina, during life, will she refrain at periods (by which I mean her returns to London) from dissipation. It is an unhappy propensity to herself and the most worthy of men—age only can vanquish it.

Mr. Seymour has been here a fortnight; he leaves us next month, and will visit Sir Orlando and you before he returns home, as his parents are absent on a tour, and will not be there to receive him. He has informed me you have purchased a lottery ticket for him.—Mr. Herbert will not turn adventurer, but I have agreed to run the chance of two tickets with him; be so obliging, therefore, as to purchase two more on the receipt of this, and preserve them for him, as they are to be lodged in his hands, in hopes of receiving

ceiving some profit. The one already purchased keep separate, as that is his own trial of fortune's favor.

Mr. and Mrs. Nesbit still remain discontented at their cottage. They have been to pass a few days here, and much regret our separation—but I must confess I am much happier without them.

The beauties of nature raise my admiration of that Being who creates all things, when I inspect the lovely flowers !

*Each vivid tint appears sublime,
And proves the Maker is divine !
Not all the pow'r of human art
Can mimic true one glowing part.
Faintly does paintings hue express
The violet in nature's dress ;
Or variegated tulip shew,
Compared to nature's vivid glow :
Nature alone appears sublime,
And proves the Author is divine.*

*Our hearts it raises high to Heav'n,
With grateful thanks for bounties giv'n.
The little songsters of the grove,
The lowing herds, the cooing dove,
The sun in all its glorious force,
The lucid orb in monthly course,
The glitt'ring worlds which shine at night,
Astronomers supreme delight,
All, All, in turn, appear sublime,
All strongly prove the Hand divine !*

It is impossible there could have been such a wretch as an atheist, my Selina ! Conceit, a vain desire to appear wiser than the rest of mankind, may have incited some men to falsely announce themselves so ; but a philosopher, who inspected into the wonders of nature, could never internally be of that opinion ; he must have felt the power of Omnipotence, at least in his dying moments, with horror. Adieu. I remain,

Yours, sincerely,

L. HERBERT.

MISS MONTAGUE,

TO

MISS GODFREY.

Villa Burton.

A TRULY virtuous passion is always generous and friendly, my Louisa, and seeks the welfare of the object beloved—example now proves it.—I will not ask you to be secret, since in affairs of moment you have sworn to seal what I inform you of, and the following intelligence requires it.

Charles Seymour arrived this morning; he had travelled hard, looked fatigued; but pleasure was lighted upon his countenance.

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As soon as we were alone he fell at my feet.—It is in your power, Selina, said he, to render me happy.—Let me conjure you to be secret concerning —.

He was confused, embarrassed, and unable to proceed !

I will be dumb, said I, smiling—yet I know not why you should deprive me of the gift of speech.

By degrees he became capable of giving his words utterance ; the substance of his conversation was—that the two tickets I had purchased for him and Laura were come up blanks—his own ten thousand pounds.—His ardent petition was, since for him I had unfortunately been acquainted with the number of his own ticket, I would conceal it from the whole world, and permit him to assure Laura it was part of her property.—The money was useless to him ; — it would restore
Mr.

Mr. Herbert to his friends and country, and be a pleasure to his adorable Laura, for whom he could sacrifice his life.—The vile dross to him was nothing; he wished she would accept the whole, but he knew such an offer would be indelicate and offend: In short, he persuaded me he acted right and nobly, and I immediately wrote to acquaint my friend of her good fortune and (supposed) success. She can have no suspicion, as she never was acquainted of the numbers she had a chance in. I shall expect you home next week.—Tell Mrs. Smith I shall expect her likewise.

Yours, affectionately,

S. MONTAGUE.

Destroy this as soon as read, my Louisa,
for obvious reasons.

MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

Petit d'Aumont.

THE intelligence of my unexpected success in the lottery has intoxicated Mr. Herbert with joy, by which I find his residence here was very disagreeable to him, though he concealed it, and appeared satisfied. You will now, my dear Laura, said he, be possessed of a fortune equal to your original one, and I shall die in peace in my own country, as my vow will prevent my ever gaming again.

How fickle is the disposition of human nature ! and how habit reconciles us to what we once disliked ! Five years since I came to this country contrary to my inclination,

inclination, and was very wretched. This charming retreat soon made me satisfied with my situation.—Our days continued to glide on in peace.—Mr. Herbert's affection and tenderness made me happy, and I must own I shall leave Normandy with regret, thankful, as I ought to be, to Providence for its bounty to me. We are soon to quit this delightful spot.—The Count and Countess de Blize accompany us, as they have some affairs to settle concerning her fortune. I must trouble you to write to Mrs. Brown, and bid her prepare Brook-Street house for our reception. After so long a separation, I hope you will not refuse my request of meeting me there with Louisa. Count de Blize has wrote to Mr. Seymour to take a furnished house for them as near us as possible, that we may enjoy their society constantly during their stay in England.

That Lady Selwin has again emerged into a fashionable life does not surprise

me.—Your kind admonition, I hope, will again influence her, and she will retire soon to Selwyn Lodge.

Mr. Herbert bids me add, it will give him additional pleasure to meet you on his arrival in London. Adieu.

Yours, sincerely,

L. HERBERT.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Brook-Street.

THEY are arrived, my Louisa; I apologized for your absence, by assuring them Mrs. Smith's illness deprived you of the happiness of meeting them; they

they were sorry for the cause. Had you seen Charles's joyful countenance at receiving Laura, you could never have forgot it. He appeared to me like the angel of benevolence rewarded by the apparent happiness he had bestowed on Mr. Herbert and my friend. Mr. Herbert is all spirits and gaiety.—His wife seemingly content, which was a sufficient satisfaction to the generous Seymour. I have not time at present to say more—but will soon write journalwise.

Yours, &c.

S. MONTAGUE.

G 6

MISS

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Brook-Street.

REMORSE often attends the best meaning actions. — I thought Charles's benevolence would have conduced to my amiable Laura's complete felicity, as well as Mr. Herbert's. — Perhaps it has conferred happiness on him; but, alas! I fear it will soon again deprive her of peace.

Herbert I find again visits the infamous Delville, consequently his affection for Laura will soon subside to its former coolness. How severely I now lament being over-persuaded by Charles, as at Petit d'Aumont she was happy in her husband's affection, and contented with her lot. — It was in my power then to have prevented

prevented her return, and, perhaps, preserved her from future misery. Now it is too late to attempt it.—I dare not confess the truth; it would render Laura unhappy from weight of obligation, especially from an object she knows influenced by a passion for her, and her unworthy partner, naturally inclined to jealousy, would have some reason of suspicion. I have talked on the subject with Charles.—He is unhappy at Herbert's again visiting his mistress—but with reason intreats me to be silent. Never, never again, my Louisa, will I intermeddle in affairs of such serious consequence.—Pity my distress of mind, for I never before experienced such unhappy sensations arising from an action I thought laudable. Mr. Herbert is gone for a few days to Elm Wood, and we attend Count and Countess de Blize to all public places. Lady Selwin, to oblige Sir Orlando, now only visits Mrs. Monson at distant periods; but is (unhappily) still addicted to late hours and gaming,
though

though she loves Sir Orlando better than ever she did her first husband—yet fashion in London bears the sway.—I am interrupted.

The Count and Countess de Blize are gone into Staffordshire—being sent for by a noble relation of her Ladyship's, who is dying; and, being informed of her marriage with the Count, now think her worthy of notice. Laura is much troubled with a head-ach.—We are going to call of Lady Selwin. — Charles called here this morning, and would fain have persuaded us to go to the Masquerade to-night, which we refused.

Not finding Lady Selwin at home, we called upon Mrs. Nugent, by which time Laura got rid of her head-ach. — Mr. and Mrs. Nugent so strenuously pressed us to go with their party to the Masquerade, we could not refuse them, therefore sent for dominoes, and in the evening attended

attended them. I am now almost sorry we did go, since it gives me pain to find Charles Seymour less worthy my esteem than I thought him, after all his disinterested conduct too.

In promenading round the room, we were stopped by a crowd.—A party near us seemed in high spirits.—Charms, like yours (said a voice we knew to be Seymour's) must subdue the coldest anchoress. Oh! answered the Lady, sighing—you *can* flatter—but I hardly believe you are sensible of my attractions, having been told you have a frigid heart.

You then have awakened it from its frigidity, said he; permit me to convince you of my tenderness—charming creature, henceforward I will adore you, putting his hand round her waist, to conduct her through the crowd.

You are an insinuating wretch, said the Lady, pleased. I told you, whispered a gentleman,

gentleman, that you would make a conquest of Seymour.—We heard no more; they passed on.

Mr. Harper, a stranger of our party, walked between me and Laura.—Who are those Ladies, Sir? said I.

Demy-reps, Madam, Lady G—— and Mrs. C——; the Gentlemen, who I observed before unmasked, are Lord C—— and Mr. Seymour.—The latter is a worthy young man, yet not without his failings.—He never seduces innocence, or keeps a mistress, but is often drawn into transient amours.

A Gentleman in a domino listened attentively to his answer, and soon after, on his speaking to Mrs. Nugent, we found it was Sir Orlando, which we were not sorry for, as he will reprove Charles for his conduct.

During

During this scene Laura was much agitated, and, on complaining of a head-ach, we sat down.

On our returning home alone in the carriage — are you not shocked to find, said she, a man we thought worthy our esteem ought not to possess our friendship. It is happy for Miss Oburn he did not address her ; for if she had married him, in all probability he would have proved a second Lord Conway.—Ah ! how Harriot ought to prize Sir Orlando, who is every way worthy the affection of the best of women.

Our dear Laura is not conscious of the situation of her heart, and fancies her concern arises from finding a friend frail.— Was she sensible of the real cause of her agitation on the occasion, she would be wretched, and think herself criminal.

I endeavoured not to palliate his conduct—how could I, blameable as he is ?

Besides,

Besides, I wish her to conquer her unhappy predilection for him, since, should she survive Mr. Herbert, I much doubt, if she married Charles, whether she would be happy.—Single she might be so, and overcome her regard for him. The propensity he has for bad women is, I fear, unconquerable, and the indulging himself in that vice now, while single, may habituate him so to it, that even after marriage he might be led astray, and render a wife miserable. Sir Orlando, who has refined principles, will undoubtedly reprove him. How imperfect is human nature ! The best men have their follies as well as others. Ah ! why did I join in his bounteous deceit ? Had he loved her with the delicacy and tenderness I supposed, he would not act as he does. A passion founded on esteem and virtue, would make the victim to it detest profligate women.—I thought him a true knight : I was mistaken, in this age they are not to be met with.—Self-gratification and love of the *sex* sway our modern men.

*No lovers now will live for years
On swelling sighs and heart-felt tears ;
But hie away quick to embrace
A harlot's form and painted face.*

We called this morning on Harriot, and found her and Sir Orlando at home alone. How unfortunate it was we did not meet last night at the Masquerade, said her Ladyship—but you went away early I find, so did not see Charles Seymour and Lord C—— walking about unmasked, and quite intoxicated with two demy-reps, Lady G—— and Mrs. C——, to the entertainment of the company, and extreme mortification of Mrs. Monson, who was in our party.—Only think how it must have tormented her to find she has been slighted for such creatures.—I must own it gave me pleasure, as I have not forgot her insolence to me at “the Charming Rock.” Sir Orlando says, if I really despise Mrs. Monson, I should not associate with her—but you know she

is

is generally received, so I cannot avoid her, as I frequently meet her in parties, it would mortify myself to be estranged from. I am much surpris'd, however, to find Charles has such a spirit for intrigue, Selina—are not you?—I answered in the affirmative. — Sir Orlando seem'd much discompos'd. — It gives me pain, said he, to find Charles has expos'd himself, and my sincere friendship for him will induce me to talk to him seriously on the subject, in hopes he will take my advice and amend his conduct, which proceeded from the gaiety of the moment—for I know him so well, I am certain he is never deliberately guilty: But you, my dear Ladies, know human nature is frail, and we must forgive his error, as his other good qualities overbalance this lapse from morality. I wish to see him married—for a wife would make him a perfect mortal.

Sir Orlando then enter'd into conversation with me, and shew'd me some drawings

drawings Laura had seen before—while she was engaged in chat with Lady Selwin.

On our return home Laura was very thoughtful.—I asked her the reason, when she acknowledged Lady Selwin, in conversation, had given her great uneasiness, by expressing her wonder at Charles's conduct, which she was the more surprised at, as she was long confident, from his behaviour, he loved Mrs. Herbert with an unbounded, virtuous passion, though hopeless.

Our friend answered, a virtuous one it could not be ; he knew her married ; but she fancied her Ladyship was mistaken, at least she hoped so.

Harriot answered, she was sorry she had mentioned it to her, lest she should think it incumbent on her to treat him with coolness, which would surprise him ; that
it

it had unthinkingly escaped her: — Besides, said she, you know it is himself only suffers, and I really pity him.—You cannot help his folly, therefore don't notice it.—It was very foolish in me to mention it, but I wanted to know if you observed his passion.

I have always found him *friendly*, returned Laura, unwilling to acknowledge her suspicion to her Ladyship—you could not suppose, that so much younger than myself, and knowing me married, he could entertain such vain hopes.

I do not say he entertains hopes, said Harriot—yet you must acknowledge love is an involuntary passion, and, I think, he cannot subdue it: However, he may strive to do it by transient amours.

You think so much of conquests yourself, answered Laura, smiling, I fancy you forget I am no beauty, though you are.

Here

Here they were interrupted by Sir Orlando and myself, and we soon after took our leave.

It seems our dear friend is very unhappy concerning this conversation.—If Harriot observes his passion, said she, others may, and fancy *me* criminal.—I would wish not to alter my behaviour to him without assigning a reason—yet it is necessary I should drive him from my presence, and prevent future observations. Let him think I know of his conduct at the Masquerade, and imagine he has lost my friendship by *that*.

I know not how to advise, said I; act as you think proper:—At the same time remember he has always treated you with respect and friendship, however faulty.—Ah! had she known the extent of his friendship; but I was sworn to secrecy.

It will give me pain to alter my behaviour to him, said she—but it must be done:

done: Besides, if he gives himself up to libertinism, he may in time affront me, if I do not.

No, my dear Laura, said I, he has too good a heart ever to insult you, and I am sure would die to serve you—yet I again say, act as you please.

My sheet is full, therefore adieu.—I will write soon again.

Yours, affectionately,

S. MONTAGUE.

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VOL.

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN,

T O

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

HOW can you expect the friendship and esteem of a virtuous woman, Charles, when you act publicly like a profligate? Clarinda was at the Masquerade last night: She was witness to your conduct, and knew the character of the women you were with. — Shall I pierce your heart by declaring she must now despise you. — Oh! my friend, how could you so publicly degrade yourself, and be on a level with the libertine Lord C——. I this morning found it impossible to make any excuse for your conduct, which was so glaring. — Indeed, Charles, it grieves me to think, that by such pursuits you will destroy your health, peace of mind,

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and,

and, perhaps, for ever lose the esteem of one of the most charming and best of women. I have called twice—you was not returned home. Let me see you as soon as this reaches your hands, and permit me to endeavour to bring you back to the path of reason, morality, and self-esteem.

You must be sensible no one more ardently wishes for your welfare than,

O. SELWYN.

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MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Brook-Street.

CHARLES has been here. — By his confusion it was evident he knew of our being acquainted with his folly. — Laura received him with a cool civility, and unusual distance.—He was thunder-struck at the change—yet the subject was so indelicate, he dared not say any thing to exculpate himself.—In the evening of the same day he called again, and met with the same reception; it is now three days since we have seen him.

Mr. Herbert is returned, and wonders at Charles's absence.—Three weeks have almost elapsed, and Sir Orlando has not

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heard

heard from him.—The Baronet reproved him I find, and granted him absolution, which passed before he called of us. Sir Orlando informed us his friend was almost distracted at having exposed himself so, and swore to renounce all commerce with women in future.—If the truth was known, I suppose he was wretched at the thoughts of Laura's being convinced of his guilt, and no doubt was conscious that was the cause of her change of behaviour to him, which made him not attempt an explanation.

I pity him, as I know he truly loves Laura, and must now be very wretched wherever he is.

Laura was uneasy at his long absence and silence.—Her friendship for him returned.—I am unhappy, said she, because I think, perhaps, the coolness, and distance of my behaviour to him, may make him endeavour to withdraw his *friendship* from

from me, which I should be sorry to lose. I acted with the best intention to set his heart free.—I wish him to conquer his passion, but retain his friendship.—His friendship it would give me pain to lose. Her regard for him is platonic, but his for her of a warmer nature.

She often mentioned to Mr. Herbert she was surprised that Sir Orlando did not know where he was, which made him pettish; and he said one day he believed she was in love with him, she was so anxious concerning his movements.

Good God! Mr. Herbert, what an inference, said she.—She trembled, seemed ready to faint, and sunk on a chair! That he might not observe her agitation, I drew him into the next room to look at a drawing I was about, and she made shift to retire to her chamber. He was called away on business, and I flew to my friend, who I found weeping.—I endeavoured to

comfort her, but I really believe his speech had made her sensible of the real situation of her heart.—She spoke not of or condemned his speech to her, but continued weeping. As she did not seem willing to communicate her sentiments, I noticed not what had passed—but gave her drops, and entered into a chearful conversation.—She strove to put on an appearance of composure, but I saw she was inwardly wretched.—Had she confided her sorrow to me, it would have lessened it; yet we know her delicacy too well to think she would avow such a predilection even to me. A slow fever ensued, which she is now partly recovered from.

Sir Orlando has heard from Charles, who has been very ill, and will soon return to town. This intelligence displeased Laura: She begged leave to go to Elm-Wood, as she thought the air would be salutary for her health. Mr. Herbert answered

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from
out

swered he should go in three weeks, and hoped she would not be worse for staying in town during that period; she was therefore obliged to comply. Countess de Blize is returned to town with the Count. — Her relation is dead, and has left her twenty thousand pounds. Adieu.

Yours, &c.

S. MONTAGUE.

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

T O

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN.

Tunbridge.

I HAVE been at the point of death. Oh! that I had died, and was free from misery, for I must be wretched without the friendship of Clarinda.—You

H 4

owned

owned she knew of my vile, unthinking conduct.—Too true she did, for she received me with a cold contempt that struck to my heart. Guilty as I was I could not attempt a defence; but fled like a distracted man, not knowing scarce whither I was going, till I found myself, at twelve at night, at Tunbridge.—A high fever ensued, which continued three weeks, and I remained almost constantly insensible and delirious. I am now able to sit up two hours in a day.—Tell her of my indisposition, and, if you have the least particle of affection and friendship left for me, have the compassion to write me word how she received the news of my illness. Do not flatter; I can bear the worst. My head is again wandering. Adieu.

C. SEYMOUR.

SIR

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN,

TO

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

THE account of your illness and misery revived all my tenderness and friendship for you, my poor Charles. I informed Clarinda of your severe indisposition: Her answer was, "Young people soon recover; for his parents sake I hope he will."—Do not be discouraged, your future good conduct may regain her friendship, Charles. I truly pity you, blameable as you have been, and wish you could erase her from your heart. I shall be with you to-morrow, in hopes of pouring the balm of comfort to your afflicted mind. Believe me, dear Charles, as usual,

Your very affectionate,

H 5

O. SELWYN.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Brook-Street.

CHARLES is returned, and at present at Sir Orlando's house, as he is still very ill, and wants nursing. He called here yesterday; his emaciated form quite shocked me; he could scarce walk to the drawing-room, where we were sitting. — The tear of compassion stood in Laura's eye. — She could not force the distant air she wished, or avoid, through common civility, saying, she was sorry to see him so indisposed, a speech used even to a common acquaintance. He sat silent and faint; she insisted upon his taking some drops. — Her attention seemed to give him pleasure—but he could not utter his words

words loud enough to be heard.—She went out of the room a few moments to conceal her emotion, and I perceived, when she returned, she had been weeping.

Your illness must have been very severe, Mr. Seymour, said she, to reduce you to so low a state—but, I hope, the tender care and friendship of Sir Orlando will soon restore you to health.

The friendship of those I *most* esteem, said he, with meaning in his eyes, will be more conducive to it than medicines in my present state (sighing.)

Every means in my power, said Sir Orlando, shall be used to restore my Charles's health; and I doubt not, Ladies, of your good wishes and prayers on the occasion.

If our good wishes for his restoration of health, said she, softened, could prove

H 6

effectual,

effectual, he would soon be well. She blushed—vexed for having said so much, and took up her knotting to hide her confusion.

I think they begin to prevail, said he, with a faint voice and smile; already I feel myself better.—The comforts of friendship are superior to medicines.

Mr. Herbert, who had been out, entered.—He was shocked beyond expression to see such an alteration in Seymour. My dear Charles, said he, why do you come out in this condition?—What physicians attend him, Sir Orlando?—though I make no doubt you have procured the most skilful.

I have employed those, said he, who flatter me with his soon being well; but after such a severe attack time is necessary to re-establish his health. Another fainting came on poor Charles.—Mr. Herbert was terrified.

My

My God! said he, how wretched would my friend Lord Seymour be if he knew of his situation!—It shocks me much—for his friendship to me has ever been sincere.

Laura whispered me to give him some drops, fearful of offering them herself, lest, on his recovering, he should discover any symptoms of his passion for her.

Mr. Herbert requested Sir Orlando not to permit him to go out again till his health was better. — He revived. — Sir Orlando proposed their returning home. He consented.—He was assisted with difficulty to the carriage.—When he took his leave of us—Laura said, I sincerely wish you a speedy recovery, Sir, and hope your physicians prescriptions will have the desired effect, and wishes of all friends towards your being restored to health.

He bowed, for he was faint, and could not speak. Mr. Herbert passed two hours
in

in the evening with him, and found him better.

I am so delicately situated, said Laura, (after he was gone) that it is difficult for me to know how to act.—If I shew common humanity, it may increase his passion, and be criminal; if I do not, in his present situation, it might almost endanger his life.—This unfortunate predilection renders him wretched, and me unhappy at being the cause. — Surely if he strove to conquer it he might. The many obligations I am under to himself and family, makes it impossible for me to avoid him.—How can I behave in future to repel his constant passion?

You behave, on all occasions, my Laura, with such propriety, that I cannot pretend to direct—but as you observe a distant behaviour now he is so ill would be cruel.—When he recovers, all you can do is to avoid meeting him as much as
is

is consistent with the intimacy of your families.

I *now* more than ever wish to avoid him, said she, and that he would marry; for the thoughts of such a friend being unhappy on my account embitters my life.

This amounted almost to a discovery of her sentiments.—They are now both unhappy.—She deserves a happier fate.—Her lot in this life has been severe.—Mr. Herbert is at times very ill-humoured, the consequence of his visits to Delville.

Charles is rather better.—Sir Orlando is very unhappy concerning Harriot, who has prejudiced her health by late hours. She is fond of gaming as ever, and Lord Robert C——, who is just returned from his travels, and a great favourite with the Ladies, constantly in her parties, which renders the Baronet very uneasy. We
have

have talked to her in vain.—Lady Almeria, and the dear cards, have greater influence than our friendly admonitions.

Lady Selwyn, being much indisposed this evening, sent for us to tea, and we made a family party at whist. Though Charles was very weak, he would be led to her Ladyship's dressing-room, where we sat. Laura congratulated him on the amendment of his health.—He sat by the card table on a sofa, and indulged himself with seeing and hearing her, which seemed to afford him great happiness, especially as she often referred to him for advice concerning her cards, and treated him with her former friendship. Lady Selwyn looks wretchedly; if she does not alter her hours she will soon be, I think, as bad as Charles. As you will be expecting to hear from me, I will now conclude myself,

Yours, affectionately,

S. MONTAGUE.

LADY ALMERIA,

TO

MRS. MONSON.

FROM Iberia your letter informed me, that you was apprised of Lord Robert C——'s arrival in town, and that all our sex were striving to enslave him. I soon found, to my extreme mortification, he was deeply enamoured with Lady Selwyn. The conquest made her vain.—She flirted, gave him hopes she never meant to fulfil, but I found she was uncommonly attracted by him.—To endeavour to gain his heart, while under her dominion, I knew was impossible—therefore resolved to give them opportunities of being together.—If he *really* got possession of her, I knew her folly would soon tire him, and I might be fortunate enough to secure his heart.

heart. — (You and I have art enough to retain our captives as long as we like.) If he found he could not possess her, he would soon grow weary of the pursuit; for he is a young man, I fancy, that will not follow a shadow when he can gain a substance. I drew her into parties at cards with him; their intimacy increased. — I hated her, and wished for her fall to expose her. — You know she inticed Seymour from you, therefore you can tell how to pity me, and enjoy revenge. Under pretence of illness I gave them many *tête à têtes*, in my dressing-room; but, like a true coquet, she always parried the assault. Last night made me happy, however, and her wretched. I pretended illness, and dressing myself in an a'luring dishabille, requested her to spend the evening with me alone. I sent to inform Lord Robert she would be with me under the disguise of friendship. — He dropped in. — I made them play at piquet, saying my head would not bear cards. I betted on her side. —

She

She was in high spirits.—Under a pretence of lowness and faintness wine was introduced. — She drank two or three glasses of madeira.—She lost a thousand. I forced another glass. — She proposed double or quits, and I betted on her side, and left the room unnoticed by her, and retired to a closet, where I could observe every thing that passed.

The game ended; she was two thousand pounds in debt!—It roused her. — She was in agony.—He swore it was in her power to cancel the debt by a surrender of her charms.—She stormed.—He led her to the couch.—She grew frantic. I see through it, said she, Almeria is infamous as yourself — but with life only will I part with my honour.—She broke from him, and immediately ran down stairs into the street. — Her carriage not being there, she commanded my servant to follow her, who was astonished at her wildness, and, without a hat, she paraded
to

to Pall-Mall, where she got into a hackney chair, and ordered the fellows to carry her home. There's an heroine for you! a second Lucretia!—You may think this affair ought to disconcert me;—not in the least.—I shall plead illness obliging me to quit the room, and her frantic behaviour to arise from her folly in gaming so high.

Soon as she was gone I played my part well, and returned to Lord Robert —. This woman is a mere coquet, said he; she allures to feed her vanity, and render our sex wretched if she can, but I am none of those fools: I despise her—and she shall pay me the two thousand pounds she has fairly lost.

Good God! is she gone without taking leave, said I; even so, answered he. — I rang the bell.—My servant informed me of what I before told you.—This is surprising, said I, before the servant, to Lord Robert;

Robert; though she was so considerable a loser, she might have taken leave of me. James retired.—Lord Robert viewed me attentively.—My lovely friend, said he, I have hitherto been blind in not perceiving your charms, and following a will-o'-ye-whisp. A rhapsody ensued, and he is now *mon cher amorat*.

I am informed Lady Selwyn is very ill; more I know not or care; for I shall not seek her, but publish her loss and rude behaviour in flying my house. Adieu, dear Monson; I am now happy.

Yours,

ALMERIA.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

LAURA and I were undressing last night at twelve to go to bed, when Lady Selwyn's woman sent to intreat we would come immediately, as her Lady was dying, and her master almost distracted.

Shocked at the intelligence we hurried on our cloaths, and in a hackney went directly to Portman-Square. Dr. J—— and Sir J. W—— were at her^s bedside, and Sir Orlando standing by weeping, and in deep agony. Barton informed us, that half an hour before Lady Selwyn came home in a hackney chair, with her dress much disordered.—Sir Orlando was in

in the parlour.—She looked at him with the deepest anguish, sighed, and fainted. The chairmen were questioned.—She had got into their sedan in Pall Mall, and was then attended by a servant, who left her when she was seated—which was all the intelligence could be gained.

The physicians imagined her insensibility proceeded from some preceding fright she had undergone.—Restoratives were administered, which at length had the desired effect.—She opened her eyes, and wept bitterly. — My angel, my life, said Sir Orlando, for God's sake tell us ! has any one insulted you ?

She could not speak, but held her hand out to him and us.—The doctors requested she might be left alone, and ordered a composing draught. I asked Dr. J— what he thought of her ?—He apprehended a fever would ensue, which is the case. She is delirious, and the reason of her terror remains a mystery.

We

We sent to Lady Almeria. — She sent word she was ill, and sorry to hear of Lady Selwyn's indisposition.

Poor Sir Orlando is almost distracted. We are constantly with him, and Charles is so affected at his friend's sorrow that it has brought on a relapse.

Lady Selwyn is so much recovered as to be able to sit up an hour of an evening. — Sir Orlando, fearful of a relapse, has refrained from inquiry. — He was obliged to go yesterday to the house, so we were left alone; nurse was sent out of the room. She then said, it is necessary I should acquaint you of the cause of my illness, my dear friends. — Sir Orlando, through fear of distressing me, has avoided interrogation—but to you I will now confess the real truth; that I was vain and coquetish you have long known. — Lord Robert C—— offered me his heart. The vanity of engaging such an object
made

made me listen to him. — At the same time I observed Almeria doated on him. She had often acted unlike a friend, and, to mortify her, gave me satisfaction. — I encouraged him without considering in my situation as a married woman it was highly criminal. — I thought not of any thing but conquest. — Lady Almeria often engaged me with her at home under pretence of illness, for she looked well. — The night which caused this illness of mine, and remorse which I shall long feel, I went to her. — Lord Robert dropped in (no one else was admitted.) We played at piquet, her Ladyship declining play under pretence of a head-ach. — I lost a thousand pounds, and was much depressed in spirits. — She grew faint (affectedly so, I believe) and we drank some glasses of Madeira; it confused my head. — I proposed to Lord Robert double or quits; it was accepted by his Lordship. — Fortune continued favourable, and I heard Almeria say to him in a whisper — “ the

fool and game is your own." She then retired.

At the period I heeded it not; but the game ended, and his Lordship victor.—He offered propofals, which fhocked me to think of. — My God! that he fhould imagine me fo debafed as to forfeit my virtue to pay my lofs! — Conceive my horror; he attempted liberties, and I fled, as you already know, to a fedan, and came home. My folly, my crime, in giving him encouragement, rendered me wretched, and the fight of my good and beloved Orlando subdued my reafon. How fhall I acquaint him with my guilt in lofing fuch a fum?—It muft be your task—but, to preferve his precious life, fay not a word of Lord Robert's infolence.—Almeria I deteft, and never will fee her more. No, my friends, I am perfectly cured of coquetry and gaming; they have brought me to the brink of ruin, and when I leave London I wifh never to return to it more.

It

It is a bait for virtue. — I fear even trusting myself here in company again, having so often shewed want of resolution.

The account she gave exhausted her spirits, and she was put to bed.—At her request we informed Sir Orlando that her illness proceeded from remorse, at having lost two thousand pounds to Lord C——; that she desired us to acquaint him of it, and assure him she would never play more, and wished to reside constantly at Selwyn-Place. He was a little surprised, and hurt at her folly—but his love for her soon excused it. Lord Robert shall be paid, said he, and if she behaves prudent in future, I shall think nothing of the past, my amiable friends.—Ah! if she would but be guided by you I should be happy.

We comforted him all in our power, and gave him hopes of a future reformation in her conduct. When he kindly

went to compose, and assure her Ladyship Lord Robert should be paid. To-day he sent notes of two thousand pounds value by his steward to his Lordship. Lord Robert received Powel (the steward) with great emotion, and said he was in no hurry for payment, if it was inconvenient to her Ladyship. The honest man answered, lawful debts were never withheld by his master or lady, and others were always paid, though seldom incurred.

His Lordship enquired, with much agitation, after Lady Selwyn's health.

All my Lady's friends revere her, and now rejoice in a prospect of her recovery, my Lord.

Lord Robert coloured. — Every one must revere your Lady, said he. Present my best respects to her, and I am very sorry I happened to be fortunate, if it has given her any disquiet—for I am no gamester.

The

The steward bowed, and retired.

I doubt not but the vile Almeria is to blame.—Women, who are privately devoted to infamy, endeavour to ensnare others.—Lady Selwyn, being now convinced of her character, will, I hope, in future, avoid her, and be worthy her amiable husband's affection.

Three days ago Laura, myself, and the nurse, went an airing with Lady Selwyn. A little beyond Kensington she was taken with a fainting, and we were obliged to convey her into a cottage.—The good woman, who inhabited it, afforded us every assistance we wished for.—Her children lay ill of the small-pox, one was in her arms. When Harriot recovered, under pretence of kissing the child, she put two guineas in the poor woman's hand, who joyfully received it, and we assisted her Ladyship into the carriage again. At night she grew worse.—The next day her

illness increased, and the doctors now declare she has caught the infection from the child at the cottage, which we conceal from Harriot, as she always fancied she had the small-pox in her childhood, and would now be terrified at the idea of it. We persuade her it is the measles, and conjure her to live according to rule.

Lady Selwyn's disorder is now at the height; it is the confluent sort she has, and is in a very dangerous state. Sir Orlando is in deep affliction, and as she is now convinced it is the small-pox, she is very unhappy. — If I should live, said she, I shall lose Sir Orlando's affection, for I shall be *frightful*. — He will not forget my past follies, and I shall be *wretched*. He humanely presses her to his bosom, and assures her she will always be dear to him—nay dearer, for her misfortune, if she thinks it one; that she always will appear beautiful to him if she remains affectionate, and the beauties of mind are
superior

superior to that of person without amiability.

Perhaps, my Louisa, it may be for the best.—Her person no longer attractive will not claim admiration—coquetry must necessarily expire, and it may insure future felicity.

Harriot is out of danger, and on the recovery—but will almost be as plain as myself, which is a great affliction to her. Sir Orlando strives all in his power to console her—still she is dispirited. Charles is rather better, yet in a low state, and sometimes joins us for half an hour. — Count and Countess de Blize are gone to Normandy.

Lady Selwyn is so much altered by that enemy to beauty (the small-pox) that were you to meet her I am certain you would not know her Ladyship ; it depresses her spirits much, and she is shocked

to behold herself in the glass. The Almighty causes all things for the best; those we think afflictions, and the sorrows of this world, are often productive of future happiness. Vanity was so interwoven in her disposition, while she retained beauty, she would have been a coquet. Now she will have no admirers, her vanity will subside.—She will be grateful to her husband for his affection, and, I hope, become a reasonable woman. Adieu, my dear Louisa.

Yours, sincerely,

S. MONTAGUE.

LADY

LADY ALMERIA,

T O

MRS. MONSON.

LADY Selwyn sent the value of her play-debt to Lord Robert, at which he was much hurt, for his *penchant* for her Ladyship was not then totally subdued; but, thank my stars, the small-pox has now revenged my cause on her. He has seen her at the window of her house in Portman-Square, and says she is become a disgusting object, therefore I have now sole dominion over him. You know her passion for conquests, my dear Monson, therefore must be sensible she is severely mortified. She may make use of the poet's words:

I 5

" But,

*"But, oh! how vain, how wretched is the boast
Of beauty faded, and of empire lost!
What now is left—but weeping to deplore;
My beauty fled, and empire now no more!"*

I suppose she will in future hide her *Sombre* form in the country, and leave us to pursue those pleasures she will languish for in vain. When do you come to England? Let it be soon, which will be an additional satisfaction to your

ALMERIA.

P. S. An admirable thought has started of farther mortification to Harriot, and which will prevent her taking any liberties with my character, as what she says will not be credited, when it is known she is of a revengeful disposition. I will inform Colonel Hartoy and others of the part she acted in bestowing a wife on him; but conceal Mrs. Nugent's being an accomplice, as she is an agreeable acquaintance, and one meets to le monde at her house.

MISS

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

TO-MORROW Mr. and Mrs. Herbert set out for Elm-Wood, and the day following I shall be with you at Villa-Burton.

Charles continues much indisposed, and is to accompany his friend to Selwyn-Place. He confessed to me he was very wretched, as he was convinced Laura does not esteem him as she once did, and fears she will not restore him to the friendship he lost by his folly.—He severely condemns himself for his past conduct, and declares she shall have no cause to blame his future behaviour. When his health amends he intends going to visit Count de Blize,

and then live like a Hermit at Petit d'Aumont, if the Baron will oblige him with the use of that mansion, which the Count thinks he will : " There I will remain, said he, till my adorable Laura is at liberty to accept or reject me."

I am melancholy at the thoughts of parting with my friends. Lady Selwyn is very low spirited, and Sir Orlando very tender. Adieu.

Yours, sincerely,

S. MONTAGUE.

LADY

LADY SELWYN,

T O

MRS. NUGENT.

Bath.

I AM now, my dear friend, completely wretched. — Misfortune pursues me. Sir Orlando, in hopes the waters would expedite my return to health, brought me here.—Two days I found benefit, and at the rooms regarded not having become a cypher amongst the men, who were crouding about women once very inferior to me in beauty.—I had learnt to subdue my vanity—but, oh! now I am wounded in mind beyond expression. The infamous Almeria, my late friend (a true misfortune to me, I ever thought her so) has vented her spleen, by discovering the share I had in Hartoy's marriage.—Let
it

it not terrify you, as (for what reason I cannot tell) she has concealed your part in that affair, which is some pleasure to me, my dear friend, and you may be certain for me it shall ever remain a secret.—Let all her vengeance fall on me. A few mornings since I went to the rooms, attended by Sir Orlando, Miss Montague, and Louisa.—The first object we saw was Hartoy.—The room was in a buz.—All eyes were fixed on me. — My friends looked astonished, surprised, and hurt—but were soon informed of the cause by loud whispers of—“*Is it possible? What a malignant being!—What is the news?*” said another. *Why Lady Selwyn, it seems, because she did not approve of Colonel Hartoy’s addresses herself, was so malicious as to procure him the woman he married, who you know made such a figure here, I find at at her expence. Poor Hartoy! how I pity him!* said another. *What an unfeeling fiend must her Ladyship be!—and she is a hideous fright too!”*—Such and more loud
whispers

whispers were uttered, which my friends and Sir Orlando overheard. I sunk on a chair, unable to support it, and fainted. Selina and Louisa assisted me out of the room, and had me conveyed home. — Sir Orlando, dear Orlando followed, shocked and thunder-struck, and with heart-felt affliction intreated Selina to interrogate me as to the truth. — If I had been guilty, he said, it was in vain for him to notice it — if not, he should speak to the Colonel. Fearful he should be induced to challenge Har-toy, I confessed the truth with shame and contrition — but concealed your part in the plot. Selina and Louisa looked with horror on me. — They informed Sir Orlando. — We met at dinner. — He beheld me with coolness and indifference. — My friends even seemed to think me unworthy their friendship.

Orlando sighed bitterly, and could not eat, though Selina and Louisa pressed him with compassion and friendship. — He
thanked

thanked them for their kindness—but, indeed, said he, after the servants retired, bursting into tears, my heart is now deeply wounded to think that *my wife* could be guilty of so cruel an action, as to make a man miserable for life, and ensnare him to unite himself to a woman he did not love—an old woman too!—is to me a bitter reflection; it is heart rending!—Merciful Heaven! that I should be so wretched as to unite myself to such an unfeeling woman. Seymour, who had not been at the rooms, had been informed by Sir Orlando of what had passed. — He seized his hand, and conjured him to compose himself.—Lady Selwyn, said he, has abjured all her past errors.—Do not embitter your future days, and render her miserable for what is passed.—Perhaps, in fact, Hartoy deserved it; he was a fortune-hunter.—He would have married your Harriot, to neglect and despise her. It roused her anger, and he almost deserved to be duped. — This, and much more,

more, he kindly said in my favour. — While I, overpowered with shame and distraction at the idea of totally losing my Orlando's affection, fell into strong hysterics, and was conveyed to my chamber.

The worthy Seymour's eloquence (Heaven bless him, and render him happy!) with the united endeavours of my female friends, softened my Orlando's anger against me. — He came to my chamber. — I fell at his feet. — Pity, forgive me, said I; I detest myself now for so vile an action. — I can say nothing to extenuate it. — I have made myself contemptible, and rendered your worthy heart wretched. All I can say is, that my future life shall, if possible, atone for my past errors. I could speak no more, but fell senseless on the carpet. — Orlando's tenderness for me returned, and, when I came to myself, I found him weeping over me. I forgive you, Harriot, said he,

he, embracing me—I will not be less merciful than Heaven.—I will obliterate the past from my memory—but we must leave this place as soon as possible.—I cannot bear to be pointed at.—In a short time it will be forgot here, and some new object will claim their attention.

Let us go directly, said I, attempting to rise, when I found myself unable to move; a fever had seized me, and a physician was called in.—Sir Orlando attended with kindness and tenderness, and I prevailed on him to go to Selwyn Place yesterday (as he could not stir out here) and I would follow him as soon as able. Seymour attended him. I am much better, and hope in a day or two to be well enough to follow him.

This evening, my friends being gone, I took the opportunity of writing this to you, to prevent your farther uneasiness of mind concerning the report, and fear for yourself.

IT
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was
disco
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and f
ensna
slight

yourself. I am weary and faint, therefore must conclude, wishing you happiness.

Yours, &c.

H. SELWYN.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MRS. HERBERT.

Villa Burton.

IT gives me pain to inform you, Harriot is become an object of public contempt.—Lady Almeria, who you know was her confidante, has, through spite, discovered that Lady Selwyn was the cause of Colonel Hartoy's unhappy marriage, and sought out a necessitated woman to ensnare him, out of revenge for some slight words he spoke of her. Poor, amiable

able Sir Orlando, possessed of extreme sensibility, was shocked beyond expression, and we found it a difficult matter to conciliate a pardon for her. She has suffered much for her misconduct ; but that he should suffer too gives his friends much pain. Seymour, ever friendly, softened his resentment, and now he has again restored her his affection. She is truly sensible of her past errors. Her whole attention is to please Sir Orlando, and she thanks the Almighty for bestowing the blessing of so very good and worthy a consort.—Her person is still elegant, tho' her face is scarred, and her flights of wit and vivacity secure his heart, because it is a sincere and affectionate one. Charles is better, and next week goes to Count de Blize.—He says he will live in future like a hermit. When any thing entertaining occurs I will write ; till then adieu, my Laura.

Yours, &c.

S. MONTAGUE.

MRS.

MRS. NUGENT,

T O

LADY SELWYN.

I Received yours, my dear friend, and wept at your misery.—How inexpressibly am I obliged to you for your friendship.—Almeria told me you had used her ill, which made her expose you, but that I might depend on her secrecy. Worthless woman! I am obliged to be civil for my own sake—but if ever a time comes that I can expose her, you may depend on it I will revenge your cause and my own, for I detest her. When you have any commands in London, employ me; I will execute them with pleasure, and remain

Your much obliged

Well wisher,

S. NUGENT.

MRS. HERBERT,

T O

MISS MONTAGUE.

Brook-Street.

MR. Herbert has been attacked by a severe fit of the gout, the first he ever had.—He is rather impatient. — The pain undoubtedly must be very acute, and I feel much for him. — I wish you would come and comfort us, for your chearful society would be a great consolation during his confinement. I cannot leave him a moment, therefore must conclude, hoping you will have compassion on us, and repair hither immediately. I remain

Yours, affectionately,

L. HERBERT.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Brook-Street.

I AM very glad I complied with Laura's request, as Dr. W—— informs me poor Mr. Herbert is in a dangerous state. — He is in great pain, and his spirits consequently very low from the agony he endures. This morning I was by his bedside:—"My dear Selina, said he, you have been the best of friends to my Laura, who is the most amiable of women. I have not at all times treated her with the tenderness she deserves, but she never upbraided me for it.—I feel my end approaching, and am happy her fortunate success in the lottery has assured her of a competency to maintain her as I could

could wish, if she remains single. You, as well as I, must have observed there is a friend who sincerely loves her, and I suppose will offer her his hand when I am no more. You know not her delicacy so well as I do.—Through respect to my memory she may, perhaps, refuse him; but tell her when I am gone that I desired not to prevent her happiness, and wish her to accept him. He wept much while he was speaking; death, said he, is awful. The separation of soul and body causes great agitation. — I have wronged her, but I repent: My dear Mr. Herbert, said I, think not that dissolution is so near at hand, I hope you will live many years to bless my friend, whose heart is truly yours. I know her virtue, answered he; she would sacrifice her life to preserve mine; but the will of Heaven must be accomplished. The subject overpowered him, and he fainted.”

Mrs. Delville had the assurance to send to enquire after his health in a note. He
desired

desired Laura to withdraw, as he wished to speak with me alone. You know, my dear Selina, said he, of my connection with this infamous woman (giving me the note); be so obliging as to write what I dictate, and I will sign it.—Your hand-writing is like a man's; she will think it so. He bid me write as follows:

To Mrs. Delville.

Infamous woman! let me die in peace. The gates of death are open, and I perceive the guilt of my connection with you. — I have often, on your account, given pangs to the heart of the best of women. — You endeavoured to traduce her character, but your efforts were insufficient. Repent ere it be too late, lest you should be snatched away, and sink into everlasting perdition! As a Christian I forgive you; but if Heaven spares my life, never think to see me more. Adieu for ever,

He with difficulty signed his name, and I sent the note. That he is so sincere a penitent is great consolation to Laura and myself.

It is with sorrow I inform you, my Louisa, that Mr. Herbert died suddenly last night, the gout turning into his stomach, as Dr. W—— had prognosticated. Laura is confined to her room with strong hysterics; for God's sake come to me, or I cannot support this deep affliction.—Poor Mr. Herbert's repentance has obliterated all his faults with me.—You well know how sincere our Laura's affection for him was: I fear the loss of him will prejudice her health. Tell Sir Orlando to write to Count de Blize, that Seymour may be advised of the event with caution. Pray come immediately, for I am much distressed in mind at Laura's illness.

Yours, sincerely,

S. MONTAGUE.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

LADY SELWYN.

Brook-Street.

OUR dear Laura is still in a distressed, melancholy state.—Louisa's arrival was a great consolation to me, for poor Mr. Herbert's last asseverations of friendship to me made a deep impression on my mind, and my friend would certainly have sunk under the calamity, had not I been with her. He was buried last Friday. — She consents to return with me to Villa-Burton, and remain there during her year of mourning, then settle at Elm-Wood; but I hope to persuade her to remain with us always in future, *if* she remains single. This house she never intends to enter again when she once quits it, and leaves

orders with her attorney to dispose of it and the furniture. If she finds herself able to travel by slow journies, we shall set out next week. Pray present our affectionate compliments to Sir Orlando. I remain, dear Lady Selwyn,

Your very affectionate

S. MONTAGUE.

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

T O

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN.

Petit d'Aumont.

THE intelligence you sent caused emotions I cannot describe ! I lament the loss of poor Herbert.—He was a sincere friend, and we all have our foibles ; yet I am ashamed to confess how selfish

selfish I am ; you who know the power of love can guess at my feelings.—A year must pass ere I can make the arduous attempt, for however eager I am to discover Clarinda's sentiments, I will not insult her sorrow before that period. I shall remain here in great agitation of mind. Dear de Blize flatters me with hopes.—I once flattered myself, but the cursed masquerade affair, I fear, has steeled her heart against me, and she will think me unworthy her hand. Say every thing you can in my favour. I have wrote to condole her, and found it a difficult task to conceal my passion. Write constantly to inform me of her health, for that only can give me satisfaction at present.

Yours, sincerely,

C. SEYMOUR.

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN,

TO

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

SEVEN months have elapsed since Mr. Herbert's death, yet still Laura continues melancholy for his loss. Such a mind as hers cannot easily cease to sorrow for a lost friend. I often speak of you, and excuse your masquerade conduct as a folly of youth, which you have severely and sincerely repented of, and which has caused you such remorse, that you now detest such women. She answers, Mr. Seymour has a good heart, and I make no doubt will in future act better, and lay aside his follies. This, I think, is some hope for you, my dear Charles. Take courage, I flatter myself I shall still see you perfectly happy with the worthy object

object of your choice. Harriot joins me in good wishes. — She has long observed your affection for Laura, and thinks you are far from indifferent to her. Adieu ; no one can wish you happier than

Your

SELWYN.

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ,

TO

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN.

YOUR letter has invigorated my spirits so, that I am quite another creature. — I look forward to days of happiness, and enjoy much in thinking of the felicity I shall have when she is mine. I intend to go to “ the Charming Rock,” and, with Lord Seymour’s permission, make some improvements there, which

K 4

I know

I know will be agreeable to her. There I will remain till January, then expect to see me. In the mean time let me often hear from you. Thanks to Lady Selwyn for her good wishes; it adds much to my pleasure to find you are completely happy.

Yours, sincerely,

C. SEYMOUR.

CHARLES SEYMOUR, ESQ.

T O

SIR ORLANDO SELWYN,

The Charming Rock.

I HAVE informed Lord and Lady Seymour of my affection for Laura; they are perfectly satisfied with my choice, and next month, my dear Orlando, I fly to offer her my heart and hand.—If she should

should refuse me, I shall go distracted, for then all my hopes of happiness in this world will be blasted—but I do not suffer myself at present to despair. — She always esteemed me, why should I surmise the worst. Say nothing of my intended visit.—She will be apprised of my arrival at Selwyn-Lodge before I see her. Adieu.

Yours, affectionately,

C. SEYMOUR.

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Villa Burton.

THAT you found our dear Mrs. Smith better than you expected gave me pleasure to hear ; but, oh ! my Louisa, that pleasure was soon succeeded

K 5

by

by deep affliction — affliction so unexpected, and at the time I was thinking of my two friends approaching happiness, as I vainly thought, that I can hardly support it. Poor Charles! my heart bleeds for him; to have his hopes crushed, when he fancied himself almost on the pinnacle of happiness, will, I fear, overpower his reason. How vain are human hopes and wishes! Yesterday he arrived at Selwyn-Place.—Sir Orlando sent a servant to inform me of it, and that he with Charles would wait on us to dinner to day.

I thought to impart happiness to Laura, and cautiously informed her he was at Selwyn-Place, and intended her a visit.—I ventured to elucidate his long and constant passion for her.—She sat silent.—I informed her of Mr. Herbert's last request. — She wept; dear beloved Mr. Herbert, said she, Heaven knows how I regret him! his errors were common to human nature. — He loved me.—Ah! did

did he still live it would be happier for us all.—Poor Charles, I pity him!—She wept. — Suffer me to retire, my dear Selina, said she, in an hour I will return.

I thought she retired to emit an effusion of grief to Mr. Herbert's memory, and endeavoured not to prevent her. — In about an hour and half Lucy brought me the following melancholy letter :

TO MY DEAR SELINA.

It is with additional sorrow I give pain to your feeling heart. I was not born to be happy. You know I married Mr. Herbert precipitately, as my life with my aunt was very uncomfortable ; there was my first error. I found it was my duty to love Mr. Herbert, and soon brought myself to have a sincere affection for him. When he was kind I was happy. His faults I considered as frailties of human nature ; I was not without my own.

K 6

When

When I perceived Charles Seymour's unhappy predilection for me, I thought my feelings proceeded only from friendship.—I wished him happy—nay, I wished him seriously to marry, and forget me.—Still he remained constant; yet I must own, when I thought he was going to be united to Miss Oburn, it gave me pain, but I discovered not the cause. I know you will credit me, as I have always been candid. The joy I felt at seeing him at Petit d'Aumont did not enlighten my mind, as to the situation of my heart, I fancied that joy proceeded from friendship only, and was happy in his company. — How I could remain so long ignorant of the real cause of my sensations is now surprising to me. When I beheld him at the Masquerade, it gave me the first intelligent emotion. — I wondered at my own feelings on the occasion, but thought it proceeded from finding a friend unworthy my esteem. I was more sensibly hurt at Lady Selwyn's assuring me she was convinced

vinced of his passion.—You know I altered my mode of behaviour to him, and his absence after that made me wretched. I thought I had lost his friendship, and was miserable. Mr. Herbert's remark awakened my mind to the real cause of the sensations I felt ; it threw me into a violent trembling. — I was ready to faint. The idea of guilt, in suffering my heart to *love* him, made me wretched, as you found me in my chamber.— I could scarce retain my senses, and was inwardly convulsed to find the true cause of my anxiety.—As the wife of Mr. Herbert, whom I truly esteemed, I thought it would be criminal to avow my sensations even to you.

My God ! said I to myself, I am guilty, and detest vice.—Pardon thy creature—strengthen her virtuous resolution—empower her to combat against the power of that malevolent spirit, who endeavours to lead human beings astray. I dreaded the
wrath

wrath of my Creator for my (may I call it) involuntary guilt, and immediately vowed, on my knees, to the Author of my being, if ever I was at liberty, as some compensation for my crime, I would never marry Charles Seymour. I endeavoured to reconcile myself to this vow, by thinking I never could be happy with him — the difference of our age, and his propensity to bad women, being a good reason for such a supposition. — His illness and remorse caused sentiments of pity, and, to my sorrow, I found I still loved him; — Mr. Herbert's death truly shocked me. — I esteemed him, and wished him to live. — While he lived I knew Charles could have no hopes. — Lately, by your hints, and Sir Orlando's, I guessed at Charles's intention. — Alas! I now repent, but it is too late. — I was to blame to make such a rash vow, for I might have been happy with him, as I now avow I tenderly loved him. — In a moment of remorse for an unfortunate prepossession, terrified,

terrified, conscientious, I made this vow, which I cannot recall. — Mr. Herbert's consent too—that I could not have expected, and tenderly regret his memory for his wish for *my* future happiness.

Oh! my Selina, this has contributed to my sorrow; my vow cannot be recalled—like a nun's it is sacred to Heaven. You and Sir Orlando must consult together, and acquaint my beloved Charles of my fatal folly.—Conjure him from me to bear it with patience; tell him I shall always love him, though I can never be his. Ah! how it afflicts me to impart this death to his hopes. — I know from my own sensations it will bear heavy on his mind.—If he wishes me repose, tell him to strive to conquer his passion, and I will always receive him with friendship. Tell him to seek the affection of some worthier object, and his mind at ease, *I* shall be content.

I will

I will come down to supper when I think the surprise this will cause has subsided. With you I will spend the remainder of my days;—how long, or how short, Heaven only knows.

L. HERBERT.

Think, my dear Louisa, how severely I suffered in reading this epistle. — Two persons I loved were going to be rendered wretched for life! Her extreme delicacy was the cause of this evil; she thought she wronged Mr. Herbert by her unwelcome sensations—without considering she was bringing future misery on herself and Seymour; yet her reason was so pure, who can condemn it? Unfortunate sensibility, united to an angel heart, caused this error. I wrote to Sir Orlando, and requested him to come alone to breakfast with me, as I had matter of moment to impart, and begged he would not acquaint Charles of it; but make business excuse for his absence, and promise to escort him here. I expect him every moment.

Sir

Sir Orlando was so shocked at the intelligence, and the perusal of Laura's letter, that he wept immoderately with me.—Rigid virtue! said he. — What a divine woman! yet how unfortunate her delicacy! — Poor Charles will certainly lose his senses; let me at least try to move her from her purpose; it can be no sacrilege I hope. He begged to speak with Laura.—She came down.—He expostulated with her, and endeavoured to persuade her Heaven would forgive the breach of such a vow. — Mr. Herbert, said he, wished for your union, your vow was rash — recall it, or you will murder Charles, which will be greater guilt.

She was not to be moved.—My conscience, dear Sir Orlando, said she, would constantly reproach me for such a breach, and I should languish and die with remorse and horror, that would render him more miserable. No, however fatal to my peace and his, I must preserve my vow
inviolatē.

inviolable. I condemn myself, alas! too late.—Virtue did not require such a rash act.—Tell him, if he can see me with friendship only, I will receive him with pleasure.—His society will be a comfort to me; divested of passion, it would contribute to my health and peace. I can reconcile myself to my fate, but I cannot bear to see him wretched.

What could be said, my Louisa?—It certainly would be impious to break her vow. Sir Orlando is gone home to communicate this heart-rending intelligence to Charles, with her letter to me.

Poor Charles fainted at Sir Orlando's recital!—"To think that she loves me, and we are lost to each other, said he, is more afflicting than if she had disliked me! but I must see her, whatever may be the consequence."—He came this afternoon.—Never may I again be witness of such a meeting!—They both wept in each

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each other's arms! — Forgive me, dear Charles, for I cannot forgive myself, said she; and let me conjure you, by the affection you avowed for me, to abate your grief, or I must sink under the reflection, that I have made you miserable as well as myself.

So kind, and yet so cruel, said he, oh! it is heart-rending. — The Almighty will forgive the breach of such a *rash* vow.

It cannot be, my Charles, said she. — You know my religious principles too well to think I would render myself so culpable.

It was culpable enough in me to love you, when I was not at liberty to do so. My candour should make you resign yourself to your fate, and seek the affection of some happier woman.

May I instantly expire, said he, if ever I give my hand to another! — You only
always

always possessed my sole affection, and ever shall. He fell into faintings, and we were obliged to put him to-bed here, and send for a physician. His head is wandering from the height of his fever, and we are all very unhappy.—I am now going to write Lady Seymour the melancholy news.

Charles still continues in a dangerous state. — The doctors declare they have very little hopes of his recovery, as his constitution was so much impaired before on her account.—She is miserable, past expression! yet dare not break her vow. An express has arrived from Lord Seymour; they will be here to night.

Lord and Lady Seymore are arrived; they are in agonies at seeing their beloved son expiring!—On their knees they have implored Laura to save him — or at least deceive him at present.—The latter would be cruel, said she, my friends; and I dare
not

not break my vow.—I shall soon follow him, and we shall be happy in a better world.—I repent my rashness—but, alas! it is too late.

I was called away.—Charles was sensible, and begged to see Laura; her affliction was so great I was obliged to support her.

I am dying, my dear Laura, said he, for I could not live without you. — Heaven pardon all my offences —.

I must then die with you, said she, falling on the bed in a swoon.

I have killed her, said he; oh, horror! As she lay she grasped his hand fast.—He wept on it.—Restoratives brought her to herself.—You love me, Laura, said he, that is some consolation in death!—In another world I hope our souls will be united.

They

They will, said she, weeping bitterly, for I shall not survive you long. — He looked at her earnestly. — His eyes became fixed, and he remained insensible ! We led her out of the apartment.

The unfortunate Charles has breathed his last. — Laura is almost frantic. — Lord and Lady Seymour are inconsolable ; their only son, so worthy a young man — how severe a trial ! My God ! how falacious are human hopes ! — This dear Charles for years flattered himself that in time Laura would be his, when her rash vow cut herself and him off from all happiness in this world ! Lord and Lady Seymour return home immediately, and the corpse is to be conveyed to “ the Charming Rock ” — there lay in state, and be interred in the family vault.

Laura is sunk into a deep melancholy, and almost deprived of her senses ! — I have murdered him, she says sometimes. —
Heaven

Heaven will not forgive me.—What business had I to make rash vows? It rendered me more guilty than if I had made none, for it has caused his death. Dear, faithful, most constant of men, I will soon follow thee.

Sir Orlando has, by Charles's desire, raised an elegant temple, surrounded by drooping willows, in his garden, erected to his memory. — After Seymour's death he had a cast taken from his face—and a statue has been made of him by an eminent artist to place in it.—It is formed in a beckoning attitude, and looking up. In his hand is a scroll, on which is wrote the following lines of his own inditing just before his death, addressed

T O L A U R A.

*Weep not, my ever charming friend,
In bliss my soul now waits for thee;
'Twill hover o'er thee till thy end,
And death shall set thy spirit free.*

Mean

*Mean while resign to Heav'n's will,
 Calmly retain thy Charles in mind;
 For Heav'n's will thou must fulfil,
 Then with him blifs for ever find.*

It is very unfortunate Mrs. Smith is so ill you cannot leave her, for I can hardly support the affliction I endure. Laura continues in a fixed melancholy, and sits hours without speaking.—When she does, it is to condemn herself for her rash vow and criminality, in being the cause of Charles's death. I cannot persuade her even to walk in the garden for benefit of air.—Sir Orlando and Lady Selwyn are often here; but not all Harriot's vivacity can force a smile from her.

Sir Orlando spoke to me before Laura of the temple.—She started, and expressed a desire to see it.—Hoping the ride may be of service to her health, and the lines rouse her from grief, we consented, and to-morrow are to go to Selwyn-Place.

Our

Our dear Laura bore the exercise of the carriage better than I expected. — She was eager to visit the temple, but Sir Orlando insisted upon her dining first; he forced her to take two or three glasses of wine before we proceeded to the place. She appeared composed, but we dreaded a relapse.

On viewing the statue, which is an excellent resemblance of the unfortunate Charles, she burst into a flood of tears; they relieved her.—She read the lines.—
“ I will resign to the will of Heaven, dear beloved object of my affection, said she; thy advice is pious: I love thee more for it; it is sinful to grieve so; in future I will command more fortitude: I will fancy thou art hovering over me like a guardian-angel, and command my resignation. Let me often visit this spot, Sir Orlando; it will calm my sorrow till I join him in felicity.”

We were happy this visit had so desired an effect.—Laura and I are going to pass a fortnight here, in hopes it will lessen the violence of her grief, and in time subdue it. This pleasing intelligence I shall immediately forward to you, and will write soon again.

Yours, &c.

S. MONTAGUE.

MISS

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Selwyn-Place.

I FREQUENTLY attend our dear Laura to the temple with my work.—She sits gazing on the statue, and at intervals weeps, which is a great relief to her. — Dr. S—— gives us hopes, that this melancholy pleasure will in time subdue her grief, and restore her to health —She is become more calm in general, and joins in conversation.—When company comes I retire with her to her chamber, and we read some amusing book.

Laura has some days past endeavoured to amuse her sorrow, by taking a drawing from the statue.—She has succeeded

L 2

well.—

well.—It is an excellent drawing, and very like. This, said she, I shall take with me to Villa-Burton; it will supply the place of the statue, and be a consolation to me to view it.

Sir Orlando has employed a miniature-painter, who knew Charles, to make a picture of him, partly from the sculpture, and partly from his own memory. — His complexion and hair the artist perfectly remembers; it is half finished, and very like him.

The picture is finished, and set in gold. Laura received it with pleasure and joy, and now wears it next her heart. Her health seems amended, and we are in great hopes of her perfect recovery. To-morrow we return home. Adieu, my Louisa,

S. MONTAGUE.

MISS

MISS MONTAGUE,

T O

MISS GODFREY.

Villa-Burton.

MY dear Laura is relapsed. — After dinner I went into her chamber, and found her fast asleep in an easy chair by her dressing-table : On it were the following lines, which appeared to have been just written :

*God of nature bear my prayer,
Pity thy frail creature's lot ;
Let me yield not to despair,
My errors shall not be forgot.
Under thy correction sure
I may gleams of comfort find ;
Fortitude for to endure
— An affliction deep in mind.*

L 3

All

*All thy saints have suffered much ;
 I, no saint, should patience have :
 Meekly bear affliction's touch,
 In hopes of peace in the cold grave.
 Torture keen, reproach and shame,
 Christians did on earth endure ;
 Whose conscious souls did feel no blame,
 And found that grief did joy insure.
 The Holy Jesus here on earth,
 For our vile sakes did sorrow feel ;
 Though miracles proclaim'd his birth,
 Still senseless men their hearts did steal.
 He suffer'd on the cruel cross,
 To teach his follow'rs how to bear
 Hard, adverse fate, and ev'ry loss
 That murmurs, they ought to forbear,
 I will resign — Oh ! aid, my God,
 A wretched creature here on earth ;
 Let me with patience bear thy rod,
 'Till I am chang'd to heav'nly birth.*

Such is the meditations and pious reflections of our angel friend. — Oh ! may
 the

the Almighty restore her to health, and prolong her life, to be a blessing to the poor and us. Her sufferings have injured my health, but I conceal it from her.—If she dies, I certainly shall soon follow her. My Creator's will be done !

Our hopes were vain.—Dr. S—— declares grief has taken too deep a root at her heart, and that she is in a rapid decline. — He has prescribed the Bristol waters. Sir Orlando and Lady Selwyn are to attend us immediately. You know my love for her, therefore can guess how deeply afflicted I am. She is all composure, and seems happy at her approaching dissolution. Her spirits are better.—Consumptions generally cause a flow of animal spirits at periods ; but, alas ! it is like the lamp, which blazes before it expires.

If Mrs. Smith is not dangerously ill, let me entreat you will come here, for I shall sink under the weight of affliction

without your friendly aid. The physicians assure me my dearest Laura cannot live a week longer.—Oh! how shall I support the loss of a friend I have known from my youthful days! — One so good — so amiable — so affectionate! This life is truly a state of trial, and to see our dearest friends drop before us is one of the severest. Her gentle spirit has been purified by affliction, and the only consolatory thought is, she is going to be perfectly happy.

We had a serious conversation this morning.—Her earnest request was, that I would remember her with tenderness, but not mourn as one without hope. The comfortable doctrine of Christianity, said she, assures us we shall meet in felicity, my dear Selina.—Be comforted, my friend, a few years, and we shall meet to part no more. I am content; I am happy at the thoughts of death. — There remains for me to take only one more solemn rite of
our

our church, in obedience to our Lord's command—the receiving the Holy Eucharist.—I must request, Selina, you will bring some clergyman to give it me; that done I shall be ready to depart.—She was quite composed, but I could not restrain my tears. — I have sent to Dr. Scot, our friend, who is to come this evening and perform that duty.

LADY SELWYN,

IN CONTINUATION

T O

LOUISA.

THE dreadful event is over; our angel friend's spirit is fled, and we are all wretched! Come immediately, for Selina is very ill. Sir Orlando and myself, with Selina, last night received the Sacrament with our dear Laura; her piety edified us.—Dr. Scot actually wept as he performed his sacred duty. When the

L 5

rite

rite was over she gave a smile of joy — thanked us all for our friendship, and wished we might, in our last moments, feel the composure she did ; for the languid weakness I feel, said she, is little pain.—When the body is racked with torture, the mind cannot be composed. My Charles I shall join thee in bliss.—Methinks I already see thee waiting for me.—Lord Jesus receive my spirit (said she, with a smile of ineffable joy.)—I come.—Farewell, my dear.—She could utter no more.—Her pure soul flew without a groan, like the gentle breeze which calmly expires. We have lost the tenderest of friends, and the best of women.—May we follow her pious example, and die as composed ; but may it be a warning to all who know her, that they may avoid rash vows.—Dear creature, her rash vow was the cause of her own and Seymour's death !

Our poor dear Selina is in a high fever. I shall expect you soon as possible after the receipt of this.

Selina

Selina informed Laura, just before her death, of Charles's generosity concerning the lottery-ticket; she therefore has willed that five thousand pounds to Lady Seymour; left her jewels to me, and divided the remainder of her fortune between you and Selina. I remain, my dear Louisa, in great distress of mind,

Yours, affectionately,

H. SELWYN.

L 6

LADY

LADY SELWYN,

TO

MRS. SMITH.

LOUISA is much indisposed, my dear Madam, and entreats me to write.— We are under the deepest affliction still : I almost fear to import it, lest it should farther prejudice your health. — Our dear Selina is no more. — She soon followed her angel friend. — Her health was long impaired by viewing the sufferings of Laura and Seymour's death. — The sight of her friend's departure was too severe a trial.— A violent fever ensued, and in a few days carried her off before Louisa's arrival.

Louisa,

Louisa, who has bore many afflictions with patience.—First the loss of a sincere lover — now her dearest friend, is much indisposed — but her Christian fortitude supports her. — How happy I have been in such virtuous friends, whose counsel brought me to reason, and a proper reflection on my past follies.—To lose two of them has much affected me, and proved the necessity of preparing for a better world.

Though blest with the best and tenderest of husbands, these melancholy scenes deeply affect me. I sincerely wish you better health, and remain,

Madam,

Your well wisher,

H. SELWYN.

MISS

MISS GODFREY,

T O

MRS. SMITH.

Selwyn-Place.

I SHALL soon be with you, my dear friend. — I have lost my two valuable friends, yet I still exist. — Religion supports me. — Lady Selwyn is with child. — The melancholy scenes have affected her health; but an indulgent husband, and happy time, will, I hope, restore it. — All her follies have been long banished. — She is pious, charitable, and truly amiable, and Sir Orlando doats on her. — The temple dedicated to Seymour is taken down, and a building erected, in form of a Mausoleum in the Wilderness. — A cascade is near it, and drooping willows fall over it. — When the mind is inclined to luxury of sorrow,
they

they visit the place. A resemblance of Laura in it is represented expiring.—Selina at her feet weeping, and holding her hand.—Above is the figure of Charles, in the form of an angel extending his hand to receive her.—Sir Orlando, with the true soul of friendship, often visits the place, and, with calm recollection, enjoys it, hoping, in time, to join them in bliss.

The faithful Lucy, whom my cousin and Laura has provided for—by her Ladyship's desire remains with her as a companion. Adieu ; I shall be with you almost as quick as this letter.

LOUISA GODFREY.

MISS

MISS GODFREY,

T O

SISTER AGNES,

At the Convent de —, at Avignon.

LIFE has been compared to a vapour, a flower — a bubble—a meteor, and various other things.—Ah! my sister, my friend, I have been sufficiently warned of its transiency! The grave was scarce closed on Laura and Selina, when my heart was again wounded by the death of Mrs. Smith, who has languished years under that dreadful calamity, a bleeding cancer at her breast. Her death I think a happy release; for had she lived longer, she must have been miserable.

The celebrated Lady Wortley Montague was for a series of years afflicted with
the

the same disorder; — whether it ever awakened her to remorse I know not. — Her follies, nay guilt, have been great — but I should imagine a lingering death must have caused serious sensations — a woman of such wit ought publicly to have avowed her contrition.

I shall now fly to thee for consolation. Thou hast experienced much affliction and sorrow in thy youth, and supported it with fortitude. — Would the young and gay reflect on the uncertainty of human life, they would avoid many errors, which health, prosperity, and commerce with the world, make them, unthinkingly, commit!

With you I expect peace, and though I mean not to take the veil, remain sheltered from the world and its follies during life, friendship drew me from my calm retreat; — that friend lost, I return to thee. The rashness of vows has been exemplified

fied by the unhappy Laura, who caused her lover's death and her own. I have long since lost him dearest to my soul — but I will take no vows; if I did I might repent it, and long for liberty, and become criminal.—To avoid it I will lead as pious a life as I can, without being a nun. I know your secret opinion coincides with mine. — When free, we wish not for liberty — but when bound, we langish for it.

Lady Selwyn is delivered of a son—is well—and Sir Orlando, the best of men, perfectly happy.—Expect to see me soon after the receipt of this, and present my best wishes to our Holy Mother, with the request of her prayers for me.

Yours, &c.

L. GODFREY.

MISS

MISS GODFREY,

T O

MISS AUBREY,

Niece to her late Friend Mrs. Smith.

I WRITE before the time of my annual letter, to inform you, my dear Sophia, I was much surprised two months since by a visit from Mrs. Monson.—She looked pale and emaciated, and informed me, two years ago, Lady Almeria died in agonies, from a contusion in her head, which she received from falling out of a phaeton she was driving with fashionable rapidity. Mrs. Monson further informed me, that Almeria's horror of conscience made such a deep impression on her mind, she became melancholy — but the Lord had mercy on her, and called her to felicity : In short, she was absorbed in methodism,

thodism, and attended by a preacher of that sect, and a companion of the same persuasion.

Lady Almeria, when dying, put all Lady Selwyn's letters into her hands—told her to read them with attention, and consider the smiles and folly of fashionable life; at the same time told her not to be surprised to find Laura had always been mistress of Seymour's heart, and that she never informed her of it, because she really esteemed Mrs. Herbert, and knew she was strictly virtuous, amiable, and worthy a happier fate than she experienced, therefore would *not* raise her jealousy and spleen against her.

I have now no farther use for these letters, said she; I give them to you, Louisa, with Almeria's letters to me, and think with Mrs. Herbert's history they would form an instructive and amusing Novel for the younger part of our sex.

Lady

Lady Selwyn died two months since in child-bed.—Sir Orlando, who doated on her, soon followed her to the grave, and there is now no one left who can be hurt at the recital of such memoirs under false names; but I leave you to act as you please.—As for myself I cannot long survive them, and shall die *assured* of bliss, being one of the chosen, though at the last hour.

She took her leave affectionately.—“Though of different persuasion, said she, I hope we shall meet in bliss.” She went to Montpelier from hence, and yesterday I received a letter from her companion, as her last request, to inform me of her death. Though enthusiastic, she still had romantic ideas; that her repentance may have obliterated her crimes is my sincere wish. I shall hope to hear from you soon, my dear Sophia: It is eight years since I left England; you are the only friend left to me in it.—It would
give

give me great pleasure to see you, but that happiness I cannot hope for.—May every blessing attend you is the constant wish of

Your very affectionate,

L. GODFREY.

MISS AUBREY,

T O

THE HON. MRS. STANHOPE.

Dear Sister,

I FOUND my dear faithful friend in perfect health, though a melancholy is visible on her countenance, from the remembrance of the dear friends she has lost. The desired end of my journey is accomplished.—I have persuaded her to bestow the collection of letters we wished on me, and she has given her consent to have them published, hoping the example
of

of Laura may be the means of deterring others from rash vows, and Lady Almeria's death—from fashionable follies; but it is her earnest desire who is the editor may remain a secret; a request I readily complied with. That it may prove a *pharus* to young people in similar situations is my ardent wish. Were they assured, and would believe it is really, as it is, founded on facts, for their own sakes they would certainly take warning. I remain,

Your affectionate Sister,

S. AUBREY.

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